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A View

OF

MODERN PSALMODY.

BY WILLIAM COLE.

A VIEW

OF

MODERN PSALMODY,

BEING

AN ATTEMPT

TO REFORM THE PRACTICE OF

SINGING IN THE WORSHIP OF GOD.

BY WILLIAM COLE.

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PREFACE.

To experience the effect of the evils complained of in the following pages, has been the lot of the writer, for many years past. Connected with a worshipping assembly where the practice of psalmody was confined to a few individuals, he conceived it his duty to lend all the assistance, in that branch of religious worship, that his situation and abilities afforded; and accordingly took a considerable share in the management of it. For several years he assisted in conducting this duty, with various success; sometimes he was encouraged with a prospect of improvement, and at other times a contrary effect presented itself; at

length the business took a retrograde turn, from which no exertion of his could recover it.

A thorough reformation now became necessary; but a tenacious adherence to established customs, and a dread of innovation, operating upon the minds of those who had the direction of the duty, prevented the application of any effectual remedy, and induced them to prefer, and adopt the fashionable, but inefficacious mode of conducting the duty by a single voice.

Although his assistance could be no longer useful, the writer could not remain an unconcerned observer of the manner in which this duty was conducted; nor could he contentedly see any branch of religious worship exposed to a degree of contempt, without endeavouring to restore it to a state of respectability. Finding, moreover, that the charge of indecorum, in the practice of psalmody, was not confined to the society to which he belonged, but that it attached, in a greater or less degree,

to all the worshipping assemblies with which he had any communication; he has attempted to investigate the cause of this general defection, and to prescribe some rules, which, if properly applied, might operate as a remedy.

As the result of that investigation, and with a view to the proposed remedy, he has ventured to lay the following remarks before the public; how far they will answer the intended design, time alone must discover.

As to the work itself, many imperfections, and faults, will doubtless be found in it; tautologies, from the nature of the subject, are almost unavoidable; and inaccuracies of various kinds will not escape a critical examination. But to elegance of language the writer does not aspire, plainness and perspicuity are all that he aims at, and if he has been so happy as to clothe his ideas in language that can be understood, his end is answered.

Some persons, perhaps, may think that the following strictures, in certain cases, are too

severe, and that some censures are passed with too much asperity; but it should be considered, that it is not persons, but practices, to which those censures apply. Besides, the disease is too far gone for lenient medicines to effect a cure,—stimulants must be applied,—if these fail the case is desperate. The writer, however, is not conscious of having given any just cause of offence; he therefore hopes, that, when viewed with an eye of candour, nothing more will be found in these remarks, than truth, and the real state of the subject rendered absolutely necessary.

*

A VIEW

OF

MODERN PSALMODY.

SECTION I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

"LET all things be done decently, and in order," is an injunction of universal application; but, in a more particular manner, it ought to be regarded in every thing that relates to, or is connected with, the worship of God. If, however, we look into the worshiping assemblies of Christians, of almost every denomination, it will appear, that, in one branch of worship, this direction of the Apostle has not been strictly attented to.

The branch of divine service here alluded to, is that of psalmody, or the practice of singing in the worship of God. This is now almost universally allowed to be an essential part of Christian worship; it is nevertheless to be lamented, that, in general, so little attention is paid to the manner in which it is conducted, the effect of the performance is lost, or rather inverted, and the end of the institution defeated.

This complaint is applicable both to the established churches, and dissenting congregations, in London, as well as in the country, with a very few exceptions; and, in many cases, it is difficult to determine whether the tunes frequently made use of, or the injudicious manner of performing them, tend most to counteract the good effect which this part of the service is calculated to produce. It often happens that both these causes operate at the same time, and the unavoidable consequence is, that a degree of dissatisfaction, or disgust, is excited, which destroys every purpose of devotion.

With respect to the tunes here alluded to, we shall, at present, only make a few general remarks, reserving to some of the following pages, a more particular examination of this part of the subject.

A sensible writer,* more than half a century ago, very justly observed, that the influence of false delicacy, which *then* marked the character and manners of the times, was necessarily attended by a low and unmanly taste in music. This remark is certainly applicable to much of the music introduced into religious worship, in the present day. That dignity which ought to characterize our church music, is in a great measure lost, and its place occupied by a puerile and unmeaning effeminacy. In consequence hereof, in almost every place,

* Dr. Brown. Estimate of the manners and principles of the times, page 45.—This work was printed in the year 1758. Whether our *general* taste in music has improved, or degenerated, since that time, is a question which we shall not now discuss.

the psalms are sung to tunes that are totally incompatible with the solemnity of divine worship. Tunes of this kind, however, in the present day, find many advocates, who are pleased to distinguish them by the epithet of "lively;" and, as if cheerfulness and levity were synonimous terms, preposterously adopt them upon all occasions.

But levity of air is not the only fault that attaches to our modern psalm tunes. We frequently meet with such a jumble of inconsistency and incoherence, that one is puzzled to find out even the appearance of design; and many of them seem to be collected from various pieces of music, and joined together without any attention to the subject. Such tunes may not unaptly be compared to a coat made up of patches and shreds without any regard to the colour. The effect produced by such music, must necessarily be contrary to the true spirit of devotion. It must, however, be admitted, that the above description does not apply to all the psalm tunes now in use; many good ones are still preserved, although they are but little esteemed, and but seldom sung.

If we take a view of the manner in which this duty is generally performed, as little satisfaction will be derived from it, as from the tunes themselves.

"Of all our religious solemnities," as Dr. WATTS justly observes, "psalmody is the most unhappily managed. That very action which should elevate us to "the most delightful and divine sensations, doth not

"only flatten our devotion, but too often awakes our "regret, and touches all the springs of uneasiness within "us." In conducting this branch of religious worship, various modes are adopted; to all of which the above remark applies in a greater, or less degree.

In many parochial churches, the singing is conducted by a select company, who form themselves into a kind of choir, and seem to engross this part of the worship, if it may be so called, to themselves. The impropriety of this mode is sufficiently evident; for the performance being generally unintelligible, the greater part of the audience is necessarily precluded from joining either *vocally* or *mentally*. We shall therefore dismiss this mode of conducting the singing, without farther notice.

In many congregations this branch of worship is conducted by the clerk, or some one person appointed to sing the principal melody, while those of the congregation, who are able to sing, are left to follow him in the best manner they can. This way of conducting the psalmody, though preferable to that before mentioned, is inadequate to the purpose, and involves in it many inconveniencies. By this mode the harmony,* upon which

* We do not contend that the harmony ought always to be full and complete; but the bass is absolutely necessary to support the principal melody, which, without such support, becomes insipid and lifeless; and, for want of which, the leader frequently sings out of tune.

But where this mode of conducting the singing is adopted, instead of a well constructed harmony, we frequently hear some of the con-

the effect in a great measure depends, is entirely lost; for want whereof the spirits sink, and the duty becomes dull and tiresome. Besides it seldom happens that the person, thus appointed, has a voice sufficiently musical, or sufficiently powerful, to keep the congregation in tune. There are many persons who, having acquired some imperfect idea of a tune, are very fond of exhibiting their supposed talents, without paying a proper attention to their leader. To keep such persons in order, requires a greater force of voice, and a greater degree of judgment than generally falls to the lot of one person. Where this method is pursued, the *time* also is commonly neglected. Indeed the congregation has no mark, or rule, for keeping the time, but the voice of their leader; the people therefore must *follow* him, which oftentimes they literally do, though, not unfrequently, they seem rather to follow each other, and, in consequence, we are compelled to hear a number of voices striking the same note in succession. Notwithstanding the many defects and inconveniencies to which this method is liable, it is adopted by almost all the dissenting congregations in London, and by many, both of dissenters and of the establishment in the country.

In churches and chapels where there is an organ, this

gregation singing the leading part an octave below; and others screaming out a few notes of an upper part, while the whole is unsupported by a legitimate bass. To a person who has the misfortune to possess a musical ear, this must be peculiarly disgusting, and tends to bring the duty into contempt.

part of the service is commonly conducted by the organist.

In some other places, where there is no organ, the management is committed to a select company, who sing the tunes in their several parts, in such manner, however, as do not prevent the congregation from joining them.

At present we shall make no particular remarks upon the two methods last mentioned, but only observe, that either of them, under proper regulations, might be attended with a tolerably good effect. In order, however, to arrive at the highest attainable degree of perfection, they must be united.

Considering the great improvement which this part of religious worship might derive from the use of an organ, properly managed, it is much to be lamented that those instruments are not more generally used, where the circumstances of the worshipers will admit of it. It must indeed be allowed, that in many country churches the expence of an organ would be very burthensome to the people, and, however desirable such an object may be, it is on that account unattainable. The same objection is applicable to some dissenters; but there are many opulent congregations where organs might be conveniently supported, and the singing, in consequence, greatly improved, did not a long established prejudice oppose their introduction.

Here a new subject persents itself. The use of musical instruments in the worship of God, is objected to by

many serious Christians; but it does not appear that the subject has ever been *fairly* discussed.* Therefore, previously to any farther remarks upon the manner of conducting this branch of divine service, we shall take a view of the principal arguments for, and against, the use of musical instruments in religious worship, and by an impartial examination of the question, endeavour to determine how far, and under what regulations, their use may be either lawful, or expedient.

* About twelve years ago, some remarks upon this subject appeared in the Theological Magazine, under the signature of Imus; but as the writer has exhibited more virulence and invective than solid argument, it can scarcely be called a *fair* discussion. As those remarks were satisfactorily answered in the same work, we shall take no farther notice of that writer. Most of his arguments, however, will be considered in the following pages.

SECTION II.

ON THE LAWFULNESS OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN THE WORSHIP OF GOD.

When prejudice gets possession of the human mind, it rules with unlimited power, and is not easily dispossessed. Solid and rational arguments make but little impression upon a mind that is under its influence, when they are opposed to established opinions; while, on the contrary, the most insignificant pretext in support of such opinions, will be eagerly admitted. Persons under the dominion of prejudice, rather than give up a favourite tenet, will have recourse to the most sophistical mode of reasoning in its defence; and, on the other hand, will start the most frivolous objections to every thing that is supposed to militate against it.

There is reason to believe that the above remarks are applicable to many persons who oppose the use of musical instruments in religious worship. Some appear unwilling to enter into any serious examination of the subject; while others, building their opposition upon their own prejudices, or upon those of their forefathers,

seem determined to oppose every thing that is contrary to their preconceived notions. Persons of this latter description are seldom very open to conviction; consequently there is little reason to expect that any arguments, which we may advance, will induce them to change their present sentiments. We shall therefore leave such persons to the free enjoyment of their own opinions, and by an impartial examination of the question, endeavour to engage the attention of those who are more friendly to candid and rational inquiry.

But before we enter upon a direct investigation of the subject, it will be necessary to premise, that we do not propose to consider instrumental music as independent of vocal, but in connexion therewith, and as a mean of assisting and regulating the voices.* And in speaking of instruments in general, we mean to allude principally to the organ, as being better adapted to the purposes of religious worship than any other instrument. At the same time it is taken for granted, that *singing* in the worship of God is not only lawful, but a duty incumbent upon all Christians, who are capable of performing it with propriety. This is a *postulatum* which, doubtless, will now be readily allowed, although many scruples, on that head, were entertained by some serious Christians in the beginning of the last century.

* Music merely instrumental we cannot consider as a part of divine worship, and where it is used as such, it must be considered as an abuse, which ought to be corrected. Of this we shall have occasion to speak hereafter.

In the discussion of this subject, we shall in the first place take a view of such arguments as reason, in connexion with the nature and use of musical instruments, seems to point out; and then inquire how far the same conclusions may be derived from, or supported by, the sacred scriptures.

One argument in favour of the use of musical instruments, is that they tend to promote that order, decency, and regularity, which ought to be observed in all our acts of religious worship. This is particularly applicable to the organ; and, in order to see the force of the argument, it will be proper to take a view of some irregularities to which the present mode of conducting the singing is liable.

When the singing is conducted by a single voice, or by a number of voices, only, the tune is sometimes pitched too high, or too low, so that the voices are unable to go through it with any degree of ease, or pleasure. Hence some of the congregation, being unable to join in all the notes, are oftentimes heard to sing a part of the words, while they omit the other part, and thus render the sense as unconnected, and as imperfect as the sound. It must be admitted, that, since the pitch-pipe has been brought into use, this does not often happen; but instances have been known, wherein the leader, or leaders, have been obliged to stop, and begin the tune again. This is an indecency in religious worship that is almost inexcusable. The painful emotions, that in such a case, are produced in the minds of the worshippers, seldom fail to abide by them during the remainder of the day.

To this an organ, properly managed, would be an effectual remedy; for the tunes would be regulated by the constant pitch of the organ, and no such disorderly circumstance could ever happen from the same cause.

Moreover it often happens, as before hinted, that the person who leads this part of the service, has not a voice sufficiently powerful to keep the congregation in order. Nor is it in the power of a number of voices always to do this; for whatever may be the strength of those voices, the number of persons who conduct the singing in general, bears but a small proportion to the number that compose the whole congregation; so that the voices of the leaders are not always distinguishable, and the people are therefore obliged to follow each other, instead of the persons to whom they ought to attend. The consequence is that they often get out of tune; and it is no uncommon thing to hear one part of a congregation singing a semitone flatter, or a semitone sharper, than the other part. To a person who has a musical ear, this is so offensive, that, not only the effect of the duty is destroyed, but such a degree of uneasiness and disgust is excited, as unfits him for the remaining parts of the service.

Where an organ is used this would seldom, or never happen. For, even if it be less powerful, the particular tone of the organ is always distinguishable, and serves as a kind of rallying point for all those who attempt to sing. Hence, whatever may be the case with a few individuals, the assembly in general will seldom sing out of tune.

From this last-mentioned evil, another almost unavoidably arises. Those persons who conduct the singing, that they may be heard by the whole audience, get into a habit of exerting their utmost strength of voice, and hence, by endeavouring to keep others in tune, they frequently sing out of tune themselves: at least such exertions render their voices unpleasant and disagreeable.

The use of an organ would remove the causes of this habit; and of course prevent the bad consequences arising from it.

But decency and order are not the only advantages to be derived from instruments. The harmony produced by them, and its effect upon the mind, furnish us with a still more forcible argument in favour of their use.

In many of our worshipping assemblies, the want of harmony renders the singing dull and lifeless. Perhaps, as we have already observed, the interior harmony may be omitted without much loss of effect; but the bass is absolutely necessary, for without it the whole performance becomes mean and insipid. In general, the persons who sing bass are but few, in comparison with those who join the leading part; the effect of the harmony therefore is totally lost, or, at best, greatly diminished.

Now an organ, judiciously used, would not only supply this deficiency of harmony, but, in connexion with the voices, would produce an effect far superior to that of voices alone; and thus it would become an incitement to devotion.

In objection to this it will doubtless be said, "that "the effect of mere music is no part of devotion; for "the passions may be affected by the sound, while the "heart remains insensible to the truths contained in the "words."

The truth of this objection we admit in its full force, but at the same time it must be allowed, that music, as a mean, tends to calm the passions, to elevate the mind, and to promote a devotional temper and disposition. If it do not, then *singing* can be of no real use, for the objection applies as forcibly to *vocal* as to *instrumental* music; and the sense of the words would be better conveyed to the audience by reading. But if music do produce such an effect, and if instruments in connexion with the voices have a tendency to heighten that effect; then will this part of religious worship be more agreeably and more advantageously performed with instruments, than it can possibly be by voices only. Hence their use appears to be, not only lawful, but proper and expedient.

On the opposite side of the question, it has been urged as an argument against the use of instruments, that the music which is frequently heard from an organ, instead of promoting a devotional frame, tends to excite a spirit of levity, and is therefore unfit to be used in religious worship.

If we were to admit the fact unconditionally, it would be no difficult task to shew that the argument applies to vocal, as well as to instrumental music, and that singing,

in this case, would be improper, or unlawful. For every species of music that has such tendency, undoubtedly ought to be banished from religious worship. But, however just this censure may be in some particular instances, the argument does not generally apply. For the effect produced by an organ may be, and frequently is, such as tends to fix the attention, and to excite a serious frame of mind. It is therefore the abuse, and not the proper use of the instrument, that is the subject of complaint; consequently if that abuse be corrected, the argument will fail of course.

Another argument, advanced by those who oppose the use of instruments, is their insufficiency to answer the ends for which music was introduced into the worship of God. The principal purposes for which singing was instituted, are the glory of God, and our mutual edification; neither of which, it is said, can be effected, or promoted by an inanimate instrument.

As this argument carries with it a considerable degree of plausibility, we may be somewhat more particular in our examination of it, as well as more diffuse in our reply.

The use of music in our acts of worship, is here directed to two points;—the glory of God,—and our mutual edification. As these are apparently distinct, we shall consider them separately; although, upon a strict examination, it may be found, that they amount to nearly the same thing.

Here it will be necessary for us, in the first place, to inquire, what we are to understand by the glory of God; and how God can be said to be glorified by the act of *singing* in religious worship.

It will certainly be admitted, that the essential glory and happiness of the Deity cannot be increased by any act of his creatures. Nor dare we suppose the unchangeable God to be subject to like passions, or to be affected with such sensations as we are. All the effect therefore that can be produced by singing in divine worship, is applicable only to the worshippers.

In any act of worship, when the mind is elevated to a proper view of the glory and majesty of the great JEHOVAH, and the graces of humility, faith, hope, love, &c., are drawn into lively exercise; God may be said to be glorified; because the principal end of the institution is answered. And this is the only sense in which the expression can be understood, and it appears to be the only way in which the glory of God can be advanced by his creatures, in any of their acts of devotion.

Let us now inquire how these effects are produced by *singing* in religious worship.

Music, simply considered, will produce its natural effects. It may engage the attention, and arouse all the various passions of the soul; but mere music can go no farther. It is by the sentiment contained in the words, being united to the music, that the mind is directed to its proper object. The ideas which we derive from the

words, and from the music, are really and perfectly distinct; and it is by their association that the proper effect is produced.

It is a fact that will not be disputed, that, in almost every worshipping assembly, there are some persons who are incapable of singing, and therefore can only join *mentally** in this part of the service. Now that those persons do not, or cannot worship God so acceptably, as those who are capable of singing, will not be asserted; but, on the other hand, it must be admitted, that the effect upon their minds may be equal to, and in some cases exceed, that which is experienced by those who actually sing. In this case, the person combines in his own mind, the two distinct perceptions that are derived from the sense, and the sound; and the effect of the combination is perfectly similar to that which would have been produced by the medium of his own voice, had he been capable of using it, and consequently his affections may be raised in an equal, or perhaps a higher degree.

The same mode of reasoning will apply to musical instruments. Suppose a person, who cannot sing, to be capable of playing on an organ. Here indeed the music is produced by the hand of the performer; but he may,

* If singing be defined as an audible extension of the voice, mental singing certainly implies a contradiction in terms. But by singing in religious worship, we rather understand an act of the mind, whereby thanksgiving, or praise, is offered up to God from the heart; and which may be performed either vocally or mentally, as well as prayer, or any other act of worship.

notwithstanding, as easily combine the sentiment and the sound, as if the latter had been produced by his own, or another persons voice. Hence the effect upon his mind, may be altogether as powerful, and his devotion as much assisted by the organ, as if he had joined *mentally* with a company of vocal performers.

From hence also it follows, that the glory of God, in the sense we have defined it, may be promoted by an inanimate instrument. And if an organ can be the mean of producing this effect upon a single person, independent of voices; much more then may it produce a like effect when united with them.

But, in this argument, our mutual edification is held out, as another end to be obtained by singing in religious worship.

By edification here we are not to understand instruction merely; for considering it in that sense, the means would be inadequate to, if not destructive of, the end. Articulation, and a just pronunciation, are much neglected by our modern psalmodists; and were they strictly attended to, the sense would seldom be perfectly communicated by singing, to a hearer who had not the words before his eye, or who had not some previous knowledge of them. Hence it is clear, that mere instruction would be conveyed by distinct reading, much better than it could possibly be by singing, which, in this view of the expression, instead of promoting, would frustrate the end of the institution.

By edification therefore we must understand, not the mere communication of truth, but a powerful and permanent impression of it upon the mind. This, in the case before us, is effected by uniting in the mind, the two perceptions which are derived from the words and the music; the operation upon the mind here, being precisely the same as that before described, whereby the affections are raised and directed to their proper object. Hence it appears, that the causes which operate in advancing the glory of God, must also promote our own edification. Or rather, that the two objects center nearly in one and the same thing. When the affections are raised in any considerable degree, the effect is generally fixed and lasting in proportion; and as the former effect may be produced by musical instruments, as we have already seen, the latter will follow as a necessary consequence.

Upon the whole, there is sufficient reason to conclude, that an inanimate instrument may be subservient to devotion, as well as to various purposes in civil, or social life. That they may be useful in some cases, seems to have been the opinion of the Apostle *Paul*, as he himself intimates, where he says*, "even things without life, "giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give "a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known "what is piped or harped." Evidently implying, that if a proper distinction or management be attended to, they may be made intelligible, and subservient to various purposes.

* 1 Cor. xiv. 7.

Having attempted to prove the lawfulness, and to point out the utility of musical instruments in religious worship, by such arguments as reason, and the nature of the instruments themselves suggested; we shall next examine how far the same conclusion can be supported by arguments derived from the sacred scriptures.

In opposition to the admission of musical instruments into the worship of God, it is said, that their use is not authorized by any command in the New Testament; nor does it appear that either our Saviour, or any of the Apostles, ever made use of them.

All this is in some degree admitted; for if their use was positively commanded, there would be an end to the controversy; and if it were perfectly clear that they were *actually* used, either by the Apostles themselves, or by any Christians during the Apostolic age, scarcely any doubt of their lawfulness could remain. But, on the other hand, their use is not forbidden, nor is it certain that they were never used by Christians in the Apostle's time. Here then we are at issue again; for the question, so far as it is affected by this argument, remains just where we found it.

We shall not, however, pass over this argument without some farther remarks, as we may possibly find, in the New Testament, more reasons in support of the use of instruments, than are generally attended to.

Here, in the first place, it may be observed, that there are many things admitted into the worship of God, that

are not positively commanded in the New Testament; at least, the particular mode of their application is not pointed out.

The manner of conducting religious worship, might be mentioned as an instance of this kind. But there are two things which we shall notice more particularly, as being more applicable to the subject in question.

Hymns of human composition were formerly objected to, by many serious persons; but they are sung in the present day, without a scruple, although we can derive no authority from the New Testament for using them.

Many objections also have been made to the use of set tunes, or musical compositions, in the worship of God. The propriety of using such tunes, and the confusion that must necessarily follow from a contrary practice, must appear to every person who will exercise his rational faculties upon the subject; and in consequence of this apparent propriety, they are now universally admitted. They are, however, not warranted by any command in the New Testament, and, in that respect, their use stands precisely upon the same foundation as that of musical instruments. Here, by the way, we cannot fail to remark, that those things which appear comparatively of little importance, it has pleased God to leave in some degree of obscurity; while those that are necessary to salvation, are exhibited so plainly, and in so clear a point of light, that "he who runs may read them."

Although it does not appear that our Saviour himself

ever *actually* made use of musical instruments, yet he attended the worship in the temple where they were used, and as he never objected to their use, it may be inferred that he approved of it. To this it may be answered, that the ceremonial law was not then abolished, and therefore no argument, in favour of musical instruments, can be derived from this circumstance. But the same answer will not apply to the Apostles "Peter and John," who "went into the temple at the hour of prayer." Nor to those disciples who "daily in the temple ceased not to "teach and to preach Jesus Christ."* In these last cases, the Apostles, and others, after the abolition of the ceremonial law, were in the daily habit of hearing musical instruments in the temple. Had they deemed them unlawful, doubtless they would have passed some censure upon their use; but as no such censure appears, we may fairly infer that they approved of them, and consequently that they are not unlawful in the present day.

We may farther observe, that wherever musical instruments are mentioned in the New Testament; no disapprobation of their use is expressed; on the contrary, they are frequently mentioned with a degree of respect that plainly indicates and acknowledges their use, in various cases, although they are not *directly* recommended for the purposes of religious worship. An instance of this appears in the passage before quoted from the Apostle Paul.† We likewise find several passages in the book of

* Compare Acts Chap. ii. 46, 47. Chap. iii. 1, and Chap. v. 47.

† Page 18.

Revelations, where honourable mention is made of them; particularly where the saints are represented as "having "the harps of God," and as singing "the song of *Moses*, "and of the *Lamb*."* Whether this passage alludes to any particular state of the church on earth, or to that of the blessed in heaven, it is equally applicable to our purpose. If the *song of the Lamb* be sung to harps, can there be a doubt of their lawfulness in gospel worship?

But a stronger presumption in favour of musical instruments, than either of the preceding, may be found in the exhortation given by the Apostle Paul to the believing Colossians,† "Let the word of Christ dwell in you "richly, in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one "another in *Psalms*, and *Hymns*, and Spiritual *Songs*, "singing with grace in your hearts unto the Lord." Here the orignial word (in the singular *Psalmos*) translated psalm, literally signifies a composition to be sung with instruments; and in various other passages where the same word is used,‡ it has evidently the same meaning. Also where the verb is used,‖ it has a similar signification. From hence we may justly infer, that the use of musical instruments was not discountenanced by the Apostle; for if that had been his intention, he would scarcely have made choice of a word that directly implies the lawfulness and propriety of their use. Much less

* Rev. xv. 2, 3. † Col. iii. 16.

‡ 1 Cor. xiv. 26...Eph. v. 19...and James v. 13.

‖ See Rom. xv. 9...1 Cor. xiv. 15,...and several other places.

can we suppose that the Divine Spirit, under whose influence the Apostle wrote, would have permitted the use of a word that might be misinterpreted to sanction a practice contrary to the Divine will.

But, after all, it may be contended, that the New Testament leaves the matter doubtful; and therefore we should immediately revert back to the former dispensation, and endeavour to point out such arguments as may be drawn from the Old Testament, in support of the use of musical instruments in religious worship. But here an objection presents itself, which it is necessary previously to remove.

It is contended by some persons, who oppose the use of musical instruments, "that the New Testament is our "*sole directory* in all matters of Christian practice, es-"pecially in those things that relate to the mode of wor-"ship; and, consequently, that whatsoever is not, at "least virtually, commanded therein, is unlawful."

This is a position to which we can by no means give our unqualified assent. There are many precepts in the Old Testament, that are equally obligatory under the present dispensation, as a small degree of consideration will sufficiently evince. The Apostle Paul, in his epistle to Timothy,* says, "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;*

* 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Here it is evident that the Apostle has a reference to the scriptures of the Old, as well as to those of the New Testament; otherwise it would follow, that the Old Testament is not a part of the sacred canon, which will hardly be asserted. The same Apostle also, in his epistle to the Corinthians,* after referring to several circumstances recorded in the Old Testament; adds, "Now all these things happened unto them for "ensamples; *and they are written for our admonition,* "*upon whom the ends of the world are come.*" To the same purpose he observes† "Whatsoever things were written "aforetime, were written for our learning, that we "through patience and comfort of the scriptures might "have hope." From a consideration of these passages, as well as many others which might be pointed out, the foregoing position appears to be unsupported; and we shall naturally be led to draw a very different conclusion. For it follows from hence, that all those precepts which are given in the Old Testament, and which are not, at least virtually, forbidden in the New Testament, must still remain in their full force.

Having thus, in some degree, cleared our way, we shall now proceed to consider some of those arguments which are deducible from the Old Testament.

He we find, not only that musical instruments were used, but that their use was approved of by God him-

* 1 Cor. x. 11. † Rom. xv. 4.

self. The truth of this is evinced by so many passages in the Old Testament, that it will not admit of a doubt; therefore, as they are not forbidden in the New Testament, the presumption is in favour of their use.

But it appears that singing, or celebrating the praises of God, by all the means wherewith he has furnished us, is a moral duty, and therefore of perpetual obligation. In a small work,* published toward the close of the seventeenth century, the author takes some pains to prove this point; and, among other arguments, he advances the following remarkable one. "Whatsoever," says he, "*was practised in the church of God, and approved by him, before the giving of the law at mount Sinai, and never afterward declared to be typical, is a moral duty.* I know of no exception that can be made to this assertion. And that singing the praises of God was thus practised, is evident, from Exodus xv. 1. "*Then sung Moses, and the children of Israel, this song unto the Lord.*" The author, however, after enforcing this argument to prove that singing is a Christian duty, is unwilling to admit its application to the use of instruments; whereas the very song here referred to, was performed with instruments; consequently if it proves singing to be a Christian duty, it proves the use of instruments to be so too; at least, it proves the lawfulness of their use in divine worship.

* An Essay to prove singing of psalms a Christian duty, by Richard Allen, printed in the year 1696.

On the other side of the question, and in direct opposition to the preceding argument, it is urged, "that "the use of musical instruments, in the Jewish worship, "was a part of the ceremonial law; and as such abolished "by the coming of the Messiah." Hence it is inferred, that the use of them is unlawful under the gospel dispensation.

Weak, and unsupported as this argument is, it seems to be the sheet anchor of the anti-instrumentalists. Dr. RIDGLEY, in his Body of Divinity,* undertakes to prove, that singing, in the worship of God, is a gospel ordinance; while, at the same time, he strenuously opposes the use of instruments. And he endeavours to support that opposition by this argument;—for he concludes, that musical instruments, under the Jewish dispensation, "were typical of that spiritual joy which the "gospel-church should obtain under Christ." He also introduces an objection made to the practice of singing, by some who contend that the same arguments "may, "with equal justice, be alledged to prove the use of "instrumental music." In answer to this objection, he replies,† "that though we often read of music being "used in singing the praises of God, under the Old "Testament; yet if what has been said, concerning its "being a type, be admitted, then this objection will "appear to have no weight, since this type is abolished, "together with the ceremonial law." But here the Doctor, like many others who espouse the same cause,

* Vol. II. page 351, et seq. † Vol. II. page 354.

takes for granted, what he ought to have proved; for, in support of his position, that musical instruments in the Jewish worship were typical, we have his *ipse dixit*, and nothing more; therefore, as he has left his premises unsupported, his conclusion fails of course.

Here we might fairly drop the consideration of this argument; but, in order to remove every false conclusion that may be drawn from it, we must endeavour, as far as possible, to prove the negative. And, if it can be made to appear, that the use of musical instruments was no part of the ceremonial law, or that they were not typical; it will follow, from the converse of the Doctor's proposition, that they were not abolished with that law, but may be lawfully used in the gospel-church.

In the promulgation of the law by Moses, no mention is made of either *vocal* or *instrumental* music, as a part of divine worship; except in the case of the two trumpets,* which were not instituted to accompany the voices in singing, but for different purposes.

In all the Mosaic institutions, there is neither precept to enforce the duty, nor direction to regulate the practice of *singing* in the worship of God. We are informed† that when the Israelites had digged a well, and received water, "they sung this song.—Spring up O well, sing ye unto it, &c." This, however, does not appear to have been an act of religious worship. The last address

* Num. x. 1, 10. † Num. xxi. 17.

of Moses to the children of Israel, is also called a song,* but it does not appear that it was sung, for we are told† that "Moses *spake* in the ears of all the congregation of "Israel, the *words* of this song, until they were ended." It is probable, however, that the Israelites practised singing in the worship of God, although the Pentateuch does not furnish us with an example of it. For when Aaron, at the instigation of the people, had made the golden calf, and Moses returned to the camp, he found them singing before it.‡ Hence we may reasonably infer, that the mode which they adopted in this, their idolatrous worship, was somewhat similar to, and derived from, that which they had been accustomed to, in the worship of the true God, and that they had practised singing in their acts of worship previous to that time. These are the only instances we find in the sacred history, from the delivery of the law, to the death of Moses, that furnish us with any ground to suppose the Israelites used *vocal* music in the worship of God.

That musical instruments were used, on some occasions, is evident from the institution of the two trumpets; and from this institution some persons have taken occasion to infer, that the use of musical instruments, in general, was a part of the ceremonial law. But if we attend to the description given of those trumpets,‖ and of the uses to which they were appointed, we shall find that the various kinds of instruments, afterwards used, could not

* Deut. xxxi. 19, 22. † Deut. xxxi. 30 ‡ Exod. xxxii. 18.
‖ Num. x. 1, 10.

be included in it. The trumpets here alluded to, were to be of silver, and all of one piece; but the instruments afterwards used were of wood* and of various construction. The number of these trumpets was limited to two; but that of the other instruments was unlimited. Nor can the definite number two, be put for an indefinite one, as appears by one part of their use pointed out to Moses, for he is told,† "if they blow but with *one* trum-"pet, then the princes which are heads of the thousands "of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee." These trumpets also were to be used by the priests only;‡ but the instruments afterwards admitted into divine worship, were used by the Levites indiscriminately. The principal uses of these trumpets were, by way of signal, to assemble the people,—or the princes,—to direct the movements of the camp,—and to sound an alarm when the Israelites were called out to war. They were also to be used on other occasions, as appears by the direction given to Moses.‖ "Also in the days of your gladness, "and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of "your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over "your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your "peace offerings, that they may be to you for a memo-"rial before your God." The particular occasions here called "days of gladness," and "solemn days," were the new moons—the feast of unleavened bread—the feast

* See 2 Sam. vi. 5...1 Kings x. 12...and 2 Chron. ix. 11.

† Num. x. 4. ‡ Num. x. 8. ‖ Num. x. 10.

of weeks—the feast of tabernacles—and the year of jubilee, as we may gather from various parts of scripture.* But we find no direction for using them in the worship of God, to accompany the singers, which seems to be the only purpose for which instruments, in general, were afterwards introduced.

From a due consideration of these circumstances, it may reasonably be concluded, that neither vocal nor instrumental music, as used in the Jewish worship, was instituted by Moses. Therefore they were no part of the ceremonial law; for that law, the Apostle tells us,† "was "given by Moses."

As the use of music, in the worship of God, was not instituted by Moses, so likewise it does not appear to have been commanded afterwards, either directly by God himself, or by any of the prophets expressly in his name. We do not find in the Old Testament any direct command for the use of either vocal or instrumental music in religious worship; neither of them therefore can be considered as a positive institution, and consequently no part of the ceremonial law. Whether David, and others, were under the influence of divine inspiration when they adopted this mode of worship, it is not necessary to inquire, as the conclusion will not affect our argument. Although we admit that the prophets were

* Compare Exod. xxxiv. 18, 20...Lev. xxiii...Lev. xxv. 9...and Num. xxix. 1...with 2 Chron. viii. 12, 13.

† John i. 17.

divinely inspired when they penned the holy scriptures, yet it is evident that they were not always under the like influence. If this needed any proof, the case of David and Nathan* would be amply sufficient. When David communicated to Nathan his intention of building a house for the Lord, "Nathan said unto David, do all "that is in thine heart, for God is with thee." But we are immediately told, "it came to pass the same night, "that the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying, go "and tell David my servant, thus saith the Lord, thou "shalt *not* build me an house to dwell in." Hence it is evident that David and Nathan were neither of them under the influence of divine inspiration, when they held their first conversation on that subject. However, if we suppose that they were not under that influence when they adopted the use of musical instruments in religious worship, yet their example, and many subsequent manifestations of the divine approbation, might afterwards be considered as tantamount to a command. And in this light it was viewed by Hezekiah, when he restored the true worship of God; for we are told by the sacred historian,† that "he set the Levites in the house of the "Lord, with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, "according to the commandment of David, and of Gad "the king's seer, and of Nathan the prophet; *for so it was commanded of the Lord by his prophets.* The prophet Nehemiah, however, does not seem quite so determined upon this point. When he appointed singers‡

* 1 Chron. xvii. 1, 4. † 2 Chron. xxix. 25.
‡ Nehem. xii. 45, 46.

"according to the commandment of David, and of "Solomon his son," he appears rather to rest the propriety of his conduct upon their example; "for" says he, "in the days of David and Asaph of old, there were "chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanks-"giving unto God." But our argument is not affected by these considerations; for whether David acted under the divine influence, or not, when he introduced this mode of worship, it does not amount to a positive institution, and therefore is no part of the ceremonial law.

We may observe farther, that musical instruments were used in the worship of God, both before and after the delivery of the law;—that they were used in connexion with singing, and in subservience thereto;—and that their use was sanctioned by the divine approbation. Hence, it will appear, that both vocal and instrumental music rest upon the same foundation; and that if the one was abolished with the ceremonial law, the other must be abolished likewise. That musical instruments were used in the worship of God, will not, and indeed cannot be disputed. We shall therefore only point out a few passages to shew that they were used in connexion with singing, and that it pleased God to manifest his approbation of their use.

Of the use of music in religious worship, previous to the delivery of the law, the only instance we find, is the song which Moses and the children of Israel sung upon their deliverance from Egypt. This song was accompanied with instruments, and that it met the divine ap-

probation can scarcely be doubted, although that approbation is not positively expressed.

It is somewhat remarkable, that, from this time, we hear no more of music, either vocal or instrumental, in any act of divine worship, until the time of the Judges; when their history furnishes us with the song of Deborah and Barak;* and soon afterwards we meet with that of Hannah.† No mention is made of instruments in either of these cases, and we refer to them because they are the only instances recorded, even of vocal music being used in religious worship, prior to the time of David.

The use that was made of musical instruments by the prophets, independent of singing, would furnish us with some striking marks of approbation, which it pleased God to put upon them; but we shall only notice a few instances of their use in religious worship.

When David brought up the ark of God from Gibeah, it is said,‡ "David and all Israel played before God, "with all their might, and with *singing*, and with *harps*, "and with *psalteries*, and with *timbrels*, and with *cym-* "*bals*, and with *trumpets*." So likewise when he afterwards proposed to remove it from the house of Obed-edom, we are told,‖ "David spake to the chief of the Levites, "to appoint their brethren to be the *singers, with the* "*instruments* of *music*, and *harps*, and *cymbals*, sound-

* Judges 5. † 1 Sam. 2. ‡ 1 Chron. xiii. 8.

‖ 1 Chron. xv. 16.

"ing by lifting up the *voice* with joy." And when he actually brought home the ark to his own city, it is said,* "all the Levites that bare the ark, and the *singers*, and "Chenaniah the master of the song, with the singers.— "Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of "the Lord with shouting, and with sound of the *cornet*, "and with *trumpets*, and with *cymbals*, making a noise "with *psalteries* and *harps*." Many other passages of scripture might be produced to prove the same thing; but we shall particularly point out only one more. When Solomon had finished the temple, and brought up the ark of God to its place therein, he, and all the congregation of Israel, joined in a solemn act of thanksgiving, which is thus described.† "Also the Levites which were "the *singers*, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of "Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being "arrayed in white linen, having *cymbals*, and *psaltries*, "and *harps*, stood at the east end of the altar, and "with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding "with *trumpets*. It came to pass as the *trumpets*, and "*singers* were as one, to make *one sound* to be heard in "praising and thanking the Lord: and when they lifted "up their *voice* with the *trumpets*, and *cymbals*, and "*instruments of music*, and praised the Lord, saying, "for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever; that "then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house "of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to "minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of the "Lord had filled the house of God." Those who duly

* 1 Chron. xv. 27, 28. † 2 Chron. v. 12, 13, 14.

contemplate the grandeur and solemnity of this scene, will need no farther argument to convince them that *vocal* and *instrumental* music were united to heighten each other's effect; and that both were honoured with the divine approbation.

From a consideration of the preceding observations, we may fairly draw the conclusion, 'that the use of *musical instruments*, in the worship of God, was no part 'of the *ceremonial* law.' But to strengthen the evidence, it may be farther observed, that there is a distinction made in scripture, between the Mosaic institutions, and the appointment of those musical instruments which were afterwards used in the Jewish church. Those parts of the Jewish worship that were merely *ceremonial* are founded upon the law of Moses; while the use of *musical instruments*, in general, seems to rest upon the command, or the example of David.

In proof of this we shall cite a few passages of scripture, which will tend to remove every doubt that may be entertained upon this head.

This distinction was understood in the time of David, and seems to be intimated by his own words, which are thus recorded;* "four thousand praised the Lord with "the instruments *which I made*, said David, to praise "therewith." Also the appointment of singers and instruments, which afterwards took place, was said to be†

* 1 Chron. xxiii. 5. † 1 Chron. xxv. 1, 6.

"according to the king's order," So likewise, after Solomon had finished his prayer at the dedication of the temple, we are told,* "the priests waited in their offices, "the Levites also with instruments of music of the Lord, "which David the king had made to praise the Lord, "because his mercy endureth for ever, when David "praised by their ministry."

But our evidence is not confined to the transactions of that day; after-times furnish us with circumstances more directly in point. More than a century after the dedication of the temple, when Joash was made king, we are informed that the idolatrous worship of Baal was destroyed by the direction of Jehoida the priest; and is added,† "Jehoida appointed the offices of the house of "the Lord, by the hand of the priests the Levites, whom "David had distributed in the house of the Lord, *to "offer burnt offerings of the Lord, as it is written in the "law of Moses; with rejoicing and with singing as it "was ordained by David.*" If we pass on to the days of Hezekiah, when he had restored the worship of the true God, we are told,‡ "he set Levites in the house of "the Lord, with cymbals, with psalteries, and with "harps, according to the commandment of David, and "of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet, for

* 2 Chron. vii. 6.

† 2 Chron. xxiii. 18. And that this rejoicing and singing was accompanied with instruments, is evident from verse 13, of the same chapter.

‡ 2 Chron. xxix. 25, 27.

"so it was commanded of the Lord by his prophets. "And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, "and the priests with the trumpets. And Hezekiah "commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar; "and when the burnt offering began, the song of the "Lord began also with the trumpets, and with the in-"struments ordained by David king of Israel." So also when Josiah kept the passover, it is said,* "the singers, "the sons of Asaph, were in their places, according to "the commandment of David." In like manner, when Ezra, and his companions returned from the Babylonish captivity, it is said,† he "builded the altar of the God "of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon, *as it is written* "*in the law of Moses the man of God.*" "And when "the builders had laid the foundation of the temple of "the Lord, they set the priests in their apparel with "trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph, with "cymbals to praise the Lord, *after the ordinance of* "*David king of Israel.*" The prophet Nehemiah also, in the passage before noticed, considers the appointment of singers, as an ordinance of David. And the psalmist himself, in his exhortation to praise God, makes the same distinction.‡ "Sing aloud unto God our strength, "make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. Take a "psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp "with the psaltery." He immediately adds,‖ "Blow "up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed

* 2 Chron. xxxv. compare verse 6, 12, with verse 14, 15.

† Ezra iii. 2, 10. ‡ Psalm lxxi. 1, 2. ‖ Psalm lxxi. 3, 4.

"on our solemn feast day. For this was made a statute "in Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob." Now it is evident that the law, and the statute here mentioned, refer only to the blowing of the trumpet, and the feast days; for, as we have already seen, singing, and the use of the instruments before enumerated, were not so instituted.

Upon an impartial review of the aggregate of these observations, we must necessarily conclude, that instrumental music, as used in the Jewish worship, was not a part of the ceremonial law; consequently the general argument, founded upon that supposition, entirely fails.

It may, however, be farther urged, in support of this argument, 'that there are many things mentioned in the 'Old Testament, which, although no part of the cere-'monial law, were, nevertheless, types of something 'under the gospel dispensation; and consequently, are 'now abolished, or rendered useless, by the appearance 'of the antitype.' This is in some degree admitted; but types of this kind were chiefly personal, (as Joshua, Jonah, &c.) and as such, from their very nature, could not be perpetuated. Musical instruments, however, do not appear to have been types of this kind; for if they were, they must refer to some antitype, or to something under the gospel which was prefigured by them. This, indeed, is stated to be "that spiritual joy which the "gospel church obtains under Christ;" but the reference does not apply; for the particular frames of the mind, and the graces of the spirit, are not subjects of typical representation. The types refer to some particular state of

the church,—to some positive institution,—or to the outward and visible performance of some duty; but the graces of faith, hope, love, joy, &c. are no where typified,—and why? Because the believers under the Old Testament dispensation were in the actual possession of them. For the Apostle tell us,* "they did all eat the "same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spirit-"ual drink, for they drank of that spiritual rock that "followed them, and that rock was Christ." Now it was unnecessary to prefigure by a shadow, *that* which they possessed in substance; therefore we cannot consider musical instruments as typical of the spiritual joy above-mentioned; but if they were in any respect typical, they must refer to some other antitype, which has never been, nor indeed can be pointed out. Consequently we have a right to conclude that they were not typical, and of course that their use is not abolished under the gospel dispensation.

There is another argument against, or rather an objection to the use of musical instruments in religious worship, which we should have passed over unnoticed, as being nearly obsolete, had we not recently heard it advanced. "Musical instruments," it is said, "have been "in constant use in the Romish church, and ought to "be rejected by all Protestants, as an anti-christian in-"vention." We readily admit that musical instruments have not only been used, but greatly abused, in the Romish church; but if *that* be considered as a sufficient

* 1 Cor. x. 3, 4.

reason for rejecting them, then upon the same ground, we ought to reject singing, praying, preaching, and almost every other gospel ordinance; for they have all been used, and abused too, to answer the purposes of superstition and priestcraft. It is not the use, but the abuse that we ought to reject. Those persons, therefore, who consider this as a serious objection,* need but to adopt the advice of the Apostle† "Prove all things, hold "fast that which is good."

We shall now return to the opposite side of the question; and in support of the use of musical instruments in the worship of God, under the gospel dispensation, shall farther observe; that there are in scripture, many exhortations to praise God, by means of music, both vocal and instrumental, which seem to be of universal application, and not confined merely to the Jewish church. Having pointed out a few of these, we shall take our leave of the subject.

The Book of Psalms abounds with exhortations of this kind, among which we find the following.‡ "Re-"joice in the Lord, O ye righteous, for praise is comely

* A certain writer, upon this subject, has asserted, that the use of musical instruments in religious worship, "originally arose along "with the other fopperies and superstions of popery." He adds, "During the Apostle's time, and for many ages after, they had no "such custom, neither the churches of God."

The first part of this assertion is a misreprentation; and the latter part, certainly, is without proof.

† 1 Thes. v. 21. ‡ Psalm xxxiii. 1, 4.

"for the upright. Praise the Lord with harp, sing unto "him with the psaltery, and an instrument of ten strings. "Sing unto him a new song, play skilfully with a loud "noise." The argument which the psalmist adduces as an incitement to this duty, still remains, and will everlastingly remain, in its full force. "For the word of the "Lord is right, and all his works are done in truth." Again,* "It is a good thing to sing praises unto thy "name, O thou most high. To shew forth thy loving "kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every "night; upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon "the psaltery: upon the harp with a solemn sound." So also,† "I will sing a new song unto thee O God; "upon a psaltery, and an instrument of ten strings will "I sing praises unto thee." These portions of scripture, with many others that might be mentioned, have frequently been pointed out as arguments to enforce the duty of singing, by persons who, at the same time, would not admit their application to the use of instruments; but how such a distinction can be fairly made, is difficult to determine.

We also find some similar exhortations, where the context has an apparent reference to the times of the gospel dispensation. The psalmist, after enumerating several heathen lands which should afterwards receive the glad tidings of the gospel, thus goes on to describe the state of the gospel church.‡ "Of Zion it shall be said,

* Psalm xcii. 1, 3. † Psalm clxiv. 9. ‡ Psalm lxxxvii.

"this and that man was born in her, and the highest "himself shall establish her. The Lord shall count "when he writeth up the people, that this man was born "there. *As well the singers as the players on instruments "shall be there.*" A like reference is made by the psalmist,* where, in the spirit of prophesy, he declares, "The "Lord hath made known his salvation; his righteousness "hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen; he "hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the "house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the "salvation of our God." To which he subjoins this exhortation. "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all "the earth; make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing "praise. Sing unto the Lord with the harp, with the "harp and the voice of a psalm; with trumpets and "sound of cornet, make a joyful noise before the Lord "the king." Under this head we might point out other exhortations of a similar import, but those above quoted appear to be quite sufficient.

Thus we have endeavoured to take an impartial view of the subject, and are not conscious of having omitted any material consideration on either side. A recapitulation of the arguments would be tedious, as well as unnecessary; for having reduced them all to one side of the question, those on the opposite side entirely vanish; and leave us under a perfect conviction, that instrumental music, in the worship of God, is not only lawful, but, under proper regulations, useful and expedient.

* Psalm xcviii.

SECTION III.

REMARKS ON THE USE OF AN ORGAN IN RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.

ALTHOUGH, as we have attempted to prove, we admit, generally, the lawfulness of instrumental music in the worship of God; yet, if their use be not restricted within certain limits, it may nevertheless be improper, or inexpedient. Nor are all kinds of instruments suited to the solemnity of religious worship.

A collection of instruments, or what is commonly called a band of music, if well chosen, and judiciously managed, seldom fails to produce a striking effect; but this does not fall directly under our notice; because such a band will rarely, perhaps never, be found in any one worshipping assembly. Single instruments too, are of little use, except to accompany the bass, when the voices are too weak in that part. For this purpose a Violoncello, or Bassoon, may be used with some degree of propriety; but treble instruments are very improper, especially if there be no bass instruments to accompany them.

But, as an organ, of all musical instruments, is the best adapted to the purposes of religious worship, and perhaps the only one that can be of real use, we shall confine our observations to that instrument; and while we point out some improprieties in the common method of using it, shall propose a few regulations, which, if properly attended to, would undoubtedly render this branch of divine worship more agreeable, and more advantageous, than we frequently find it.

Here, however, let it be understood, that we mean not to animadvert upon the abilities of any organist, as a musician; but shall confine ourselves solely to the use of the instrument in divine worsbip.

Instrumental music, independent of vocal, cannot, in our opinion, constitute any part of the worship of God, as has been already hinted. In churches, and chapels, where, after the service has commenced, voluntaries on the organ are admitted, they are, we apprehend, not considered as a part of the worship, but rather a temporary suspension of it. Whether such an interruption be at all necessary, as a ralaxation from that strict attention which the importance of divine worship requires, we shall not dispute; but the propriety of the practice seems doubtful. We therefore shall only observe, that where voluntaries are used, they ought to be strictly adapted to the solemnity of the occasion, and not protracted to an improper length; on both which accounts there is oftentimes ground of complaint. But as the main object of our design is the improvement of psalmody, we shall

more particularly attend to the use of an organ as an accompaniment to the psalm tunes.

In this accompaniment, the organ is frequently too powerful, so that the voices cannot be distinctly heard. This is occasioned in part by playing the harmony too full; and in part by using too many stops.

With respect to the harmony, we conceive it would be of advantage, frequently to leave out the intermediate parts of the chord, and, in general, to play only the principal melody and the bass. If this mode were adopted, the leading part would be more distinctly heard, and understood, by the congregation, who would then be able to join in this part of the worship without any difficulty. It may be proper, however, on some occasions to fill up the harmony; especially when the words require a particular emphasis. This occasional introduction of the chords would produce a much better effect than a constant monotony of full harmony, which not only destroys the expression, but frequently obscures the principal melody, and renders it unintelligible to many of the audience.

But the organ may likewise become too powerful by the use of too many stops. A proper equilibrium ought always to be preserved between the instrument and the voices; when the voices are weak, the organ should be soft in proportion, and, in all cases, to be so managed that the voices may be distinctly heard, and, as far as possible, the words understood. The strength of the

organ also ought to be accommodated to the sense of the words, and varied accordingly. The most useful, and most agreeable stops for accompanying the psalm tunes, are the diapasons, the principal, and their unisons, or octaves. The compound stops should be sparingly used, because their effect is similar to that of a constant full harmony.

After all that can be said, this part of the business must, in a great measure, be left to the discretion of the organist; whose best guide, in this case, is the sense of the words, which he should always have before him, and to which, if he wishes to conduct this duty with propriety, he must pay a constant attention.

Another thing which we cannot fail to remark, is the introduction of *extemporaneous* interludes, between the several stanzas of the psalm. This practice, or rather the abuse of it, has given offence to many serious persons, while it has yielded satisfaction to few, or none. A short interlude, suited to the melody of the tune, is not only proper, but in some degree necessary, that the congregation may have sufficient time to take breath; but when, by an extraneous air, inapposite to the subject, and protracted to an enormous length, the mind is diverted from its proper object, the impropriety of the practice, to say no worse of it, becomes sufficiently notorious. We sometimes, and indeed too often, find that an organist, after tickling the ears of his audience with a succession of unmeaning flourishes, and exhibiting the dexterity of his fingers at the expence of his judgment, returns

abruptly to the subject, without any previous preparation. Hence the people, being taken by a kind of surprise, are unable to join in the beginning of the next stanza, unless indeed, as is oftentimes the case, the organist be sufficiently complaisant to wait for them, by holding the first note beyond its limited length.

But we need not waste our time in exposing the bad tendency of a custom which every rational person must condemn, and which very few will undertake to defend. Therefore, to remove every impropriety that may arise from this source, we would abolish entirely the use of *extemporaneous* interludes, and substitute, in their place, short symphonies set for each particular occasion. The kind of symphony which we would recommend, should be short, and strictly adapted to the melody of the tune. Perhaps a repetition of the last line, or, at most, of the last two lines, with very little variation, or embellishment, would answer the purpose better than any thing else that could be introduced. This symphony, with every embellishment that is admitted into it, should be written with the psalm tune to which it is adapted, and constantly adhered to, without any alteration, whenever that tune is brought into use.* The advantages that would accrue from this plan are obvious; for the attention of the hearers would never be diverted from the subject of the psalm; but, by repeated use, the symphony would

* In secular music, the symphonies are always written, and never varied from; and no good reason can be assigned, why the same procedure should not be adopted in sacred music.

soon become as familiar, to those that sing, as the tune itself, so that they would never be at a loss when to begin the succeeding stanza.

If extemporary interludes between the stanzas be improper, much more so are those extraneous flourishes which are frequently introduced at the end of every line. Sometimes indeed, a few passing notes may be proper, to lead on the melody; but when such notes are thought necessary, their effect should first be duly considered, and then, if they are proper to be used at all, they should be written with the tune, and constantly attended to. This may seem a trifling circumstance, but if notes of this kind be too insignificant to be written, they ought not to be used.

In all places of worship, where there is an organ, it is usual, after the clerk has named the psalm, or hymn, to play over the tune that is to be sung. This is commonly called, "giving out the tune." Its principal uses are to convey to the congregation some idea of the tune, and to give them the proper key, or pitch; so that they may be able to join with the first note. To answer these purposes, the principal melody and the bass, should be played in as plain and simple a manner as possible, without the interior harmony, and without any extraneous embellishment whatsoever. In this particular there is frequently ground of complaint; for instead of the simple melody, we hear it intermixed with so many flourishes and variations, that every idea of the original tune is lost. When this is the case, the design of the practice is frustrated.

When the tune is a double one, on such as requires two stanzas, to give out the whole tune, or to play it quite through, would be tedious, as well as unnecessary. In that case it should be properly contracted, and written as a prelude to be constantly used, instead of the whole tune.

In accompanying the psalm tunes, as before hinted, a particular attention should be paid to the sense of the words, giving to every sentence its proper emphasis, and taking care not to overpower the voices by playing the organ too full.

At the end of the tune the symphony should be introduced, simply as it is written, and with a strict attention to the time, not only in the symphony itself, but in returning again to the tune, so as not to leave an indeterminate pause between them. Hence the congregation, without depending entirely upon the ear, would soon acquire a habit of singing correctly in time, as well as in tune; and every successive stanza would commence with the organ, *and all the voices*, at the same instant.

Of the propriety of voluntaries, when introduced between the parts of the service, we have already expressed our doubts. It is also customary, in most places, for the organist to compliment his audience with a voluntary as they are retiring. This practice, we conceive, is in itself perfectly indifferent; but unless it be kept under certain regulations, it may become very improper. In all these voluntaries the organist ought to have a retro-

spect to the subject of the discourse which has just been delivered, and to adapt the subject of the music accordingly. In common these voluntaries are sprightly, they are frequently begun abruptly, and on the full organ. When the preceding discourse has been upon a joyful subject, all this is very proper; but it is directly the reverse when the discourse has been calculated to produce more solemn, or affecting sensations. In the latter case, the music, in general, should be confined to the minor key,—it should not commence abruptly,—nor on the full organ; the swell, or some of the soft stops should be used, and so managed that the beginning of the piece may become almost imperceptible. The management of these voluntaries, however, must be left to the judgment of the organist, who ought to be careful that he does not, by the effect of the music, dissipate the good impressions which the discourse may have left upon the minds of the hearers.

Whether, upon the whole, these after-pieces be of any real use, or the contrary, we shall not dispute; but we are of opinion, that if a voluntary, or piece of music, properly adapted to the solemnity of religious worship, were constantly introduced as a kind of prelude to the service, it would be attended with some good effects. In many church-yards, as well as those belonging to dissenting places of worship, it is become a kind of custom for the people, before the service begins, to assemble in parties, for the purpose of holding some conversation together. However innocent, or even commendable, this may be in itself, it frequently becomes improper by be-

ing continued till the service has actually commenced. Now if a piece of music, suited to the occasion, were previously introduced, it would operate as a kind of signal to those who might be engaged in such conversation, and give them time to take their respective places, without confusion to themselves, or disturbance to others. Such music would also tend to compose and solemnize the minds of the hearers, in general,—to draw their attention from improper objects,—and, in some degree, to prepare them for the approaching duties of religious worship.

We shall now proceed to make some observations upon the practice of singing in divine worship; in the course of which we may occasionally drop some farther hints respecting the use of the organ.

SECTION IV.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE PRACTICE OF SINGING IN RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.

THE present state of psalmody, as has been already observed, is such as requires a general reformation. The manner in which this duty is conducted, is, in many cases, disgraceful to a Christian society; and, in general, the improprieties admitted into it are so numerous, that the purposes of the institution are in a great measure frustrated. This being the case, we shall make no apology for any strictures that we may be disposed to advance upon the subject.

We have already expressed our disapprobation of the *fashionable* method of conducting this duty by a single person. This mode, however, may be admitted with some propriety, where there is an organ to accompany the singer; but even in this case a company of singers would be preferable.

Although singing in divine worship may receive much improvement from the use of an organ, as we have en-

deavoured to shew; yet there are some disorders, in the modern practice, for which an organ can furnish no remedy. The improprieties with which this duty abounds, are sometimes chargeable upon the person, or persons, who conduct it,—sometimes upon the congregation at large,—and frequently upon both. Upon these defects we shall make some particular remarks, and, as we proceed, shall offer a few hints, which, if properly applied, may tend to remove the causes of complaint.

The first thing that presents itself to our consideration, is the correspondence of the music to the words. This is an object of great importance, as the profitable exercise of this duty depends, in a great degree upon it. When the music is properly adapted to the sense of the words, they mutually assist and animate each other,—the music acquires additional energy and expression from the words, while, at the same time, it adds life and vigour to the sacred exercises of devotion. On the other hand, for want of a proper degree of attention to this particular, the words and the music are often at variance, and sometimes in direct opposition to each other; different, or contrary passions are excited, and consequently the music, instead of assisting, tends to destroy the good effect which the words are calculated to produce.

To adapt music and words to each other with propriety, is a work that requires a considerable portion, both of judgment and taste; it is no wonder therefore, that, in general, we find so little satisfaction in the execution of it.

In country churches the choice of the psalm, as well as the tune, is commonly left to the clerk, or to the singers, who generally fix upon some particular psalm, or hymn, for the sake of the music to which it is set in their music books; and hence they sometimes stumble upon something like propriety in the connexion between the words and the tune, although, perhaps, at the same time, neither of them has the least affinity to the sermon, or to the other parts of the service. Nor is the case at all mended by those who have appointed particular psalms for every Sunday in the year; unless the minister follows their example, and keeps up an annual routine in the delivery of his discourses.

In dissenting congregations the psalms, or hymns, are generally chosen by the minister, or are submitted to his inspection; the words therefore are, or may be, suited to the particular circumstances of the day. But with respect to the tune, the case is very different; for in many places, the leading singers remain totally ignorant of the psalm, till it is announced to them by the clerk, or person who reads it; they are told the metre, and that is considered as quite sufficient to direct them in the choice of a tune. Where this practice is followed, it must be considered as the effect of mere accident, if ever the words and the music happen to be in any degree correspondent.

In some congregations, however, the psalm is pointed out to the singers, some little time previous to its performance. In consequence hereof, the whole attention

of the principal singers seems to be engaged in selecting a tune,—arranging the parts,—and sometimes silently running it over, during the most solemn parts of the service. Notwithstanding all this, we frequently find as much impropriety in the choice as in the former case, where no time is allowed for previous consideration.

It is a rule laid down by writers on this subject, that tunes in the major key are peculiarly adapted to psalms of praise and thanksgiving; while those in the minor key are more particularly applicable to psalms of prayer, confession, and humiliation. This rule, although it is true in general, is defective; for in some cases it may be strictly observed, and yet the music be unsuitable to the words; on the other hand the music may be very proper, when this rule is not attended to. The general subject of the words should be duly considered, and such music applied as tend to excite the same, or similar affections This, as before observed, is a work of some difficulty, and must be left to the judgment and taste of the performers, as no certain rules can be given that are sufficiently explanatory of the subject. It is evident, however, that this part of the business requires some previous consideration, and to execute it properly will necessarily take up a considerable portion of time; it ought therefore never to be done during the time of divine worship, if, by any means, it can be avoided.

It would, in some measure, remove this impropriety, if those who conduct the singing would make a point of attending early, so that they might have sufficient time

to receive the several psalms appointed to be sung, and to adapt tunes to them respectively, before the worship begins. But even this mode would be subject to many defects, as well as inconveniences; we therefore apprehend that it would be much more advantageous to have tunes previously adapted to such psalms, or hymns, as are in regular use, and constantly to apply the same tunes when those psalms, or hymns, are sung.

There is no rule by which we can judge of propriety, so well as by experiment, or actual trial; in this case, therefore, the persons who conduct this part of religious worship, should allot some time for private practice. Of this time, a part would be profitably employed in singing over a psalm, or hymn, to several different tunes, till one was found that perfectly suited it; then let the name, or some distinctive mark, of that tune be annexed to the psalm, and whenever that psalm is appointed, let it be constantly sung to the same tune. "But," say some of our modern singers, "if we submit to this rule, "we shall have no opportunity of introducing *new tunes*." This is very true, but as it is evident that this objection will have no weight, except with those who prefer novelty to propriety, we shall pass it over without farther notice. It may also be said, that to adapt tunes in this way, to all the psalms, and hymns, in common use, would be a work of labour, and would also take up a very great portion of time. This is readily admitted, but we are persuaded that the advantages arising from this plan would amply repay every expence of labour and time that might be employed in its execution.

In the choice of tunes there is one thing which we must not pass over unnoticed, although it is of less importance than the general character and tendency of the music. Many of our modern psalm tunes, as well as some ancient ones, are so constructed as to require the repetition of a line, or sometimes of a part of a line. When tunes of this kind are chosen, they should be applied only to words that will admit of such repetition with propriety. Indeed a singer, who possesses but an ordinary share of common sense, may generally, with a proper degree of attention, avoid those improprieties which, on this account, so frequently occur in our worshipping assemblies. But of this we shall have occasion to speak more fully hereafter.

When an experiment is made for the purpose above mentioned, it is not sufficient to attend merely to one, or two of the stanzas, but to sing the psalm, or hymn quite through, and to compare the tune with the whole of it; for it is obvious that a tune may perfectly suit one part, and be directly opposite to another part of the same psalm. Hence arises a difficulty that, by the common mode of practice, is not easily overcome.

There are many psalms, and hymns, in common use, to the whole of which no one tune can be applied with propriety.* In cases of this kind therefore, two, or more

* Many instances of this kind might be referred to, but we shall only point out, from Dr. WATT's Version, Psalms 1st,—42nd, Part II.—95th (s. M.)—and 119th, Part I.

tunes should be chosen, their names written against the stanzas to which they are respectively adapted, and constantly used when those stanzas are sung. In accommodating tunes to a psalm of this kind, a change may be made from a major to a minor key, upon the same letter; or from a major, to a minor upon the sixth of the original major key; and *vice versa*. Either of these modes may be adopted with a good effect, and the judgment of the performers must direct them which to prefer. This regulation may, at first view, present some appearance of difficulty, but we are persuaded that a little practice will render it familiar, and perfectly easy.

We are naturally led, in the next place, to examine the practice, which prevails in many places of religious worship, of reading the psalms line by line. This practice destroys the effect, both of the words and the music; and, while it is continued, every attempt to render the duty of singing respectable, must prove abortive. Those who contend for this mode of singing seem to be sensible of its impropriety, and accordingly have adopted a kind of amendment, by reading two lines together instead of one; this, however, is of little use for very few of the improprieties are removed by the alteration.

By attending to the effects of this practice, as they relate to the words, we shall find that the sense is frequently injured by it. Whoever will read over a few of the psalms in this manner, cannot fail to be convinced of the truth of this observation. Perhaps there is no version of the psalms wherein the improprieties of this

custom are more guarded against, than in that of Dr. WATTS. The consequences of this mode of singing were well understood by that ingenious writer, who, in the preface to his psalms, makes this remark. "It were to "be wished that all congregations, and private families "would sing as they do in foreign Protestant churches, "without reading line by line. The author has done "what he could to make the sense complete in every "line or two, yet many inconveniencies will always at-"tend this unhappy manner of singing." After all the ingenuity and attention that were undoubtedly bestowed upon it, there are, even in this version, numberless instances of impropriety that must necessarily arise from this manner of reading. We might point out many particular cases wherein such interruptions of the sense occur;* but they must be apparent to every reader, and they cannot fail to strike the attention with greater force, when, by this unhappy mode they are brought into practice. In consequence of these frequent interruptions, the people are forced to drag on heavily through two tedious lines without any meaning; and before the subsequent lines are read, or the sense completed, the preceding ones are oftentimes forgotten. Hence it will excite no surprize, if the hearers degenerate into a habit of attending to the mere sound of the words, while their sense, and general design are neglected.

* Among the instances that may be found in Dr. WATTS's Version, we shall only refer to the first stanzas of Psalms 119th, Part III.—122nd, Part I.—124.—125th, Part I.—130th, Part I.—and 139th, Part I. But there is scarcely a psalm that does not furnish an instance of the same kind, in one, or more of the stanzas.

But the effect of this practice upon the music is also to be considered; and, in this view of it, we shall find that it tends to counteract the design of the institution. If the music do not awaken the passions, and raise the affections to their proper object, it answers no good purpose whatsoever; and it is evident, that the frequent interruptions, occasioned by this manner of conducting it, have a tendency to destroy that effect. A continued succession of sounds constitutes the very essence of melody; and harmony loses its power when it loses its connexion. Whether, therefore, we consider the melody, or the harmony, or the union of both, as the cause, the effect fails when the continuation is broken by long and repeated interruptions.

That a practice which involves in it so many, and such glaring improprieties, should so generally prevail, is a matter of real surprise; and one would naturally be led to conclude, that it possessed some good properties which might counterbalance its inconveniencies. But of the advantage resulting from this mode, its most strenuous advocates have never been able to produce more than one instance.

It is said, that this mode of singing enables those to join in the duty who cannot read, and that if it were abolished, all such persons would be deprived of that benefit.

Soon after the reformation, when this mode of singing was first introduced into religious worship, this argument

might have been urged in its favour, with some degree of propriety and with considerable force.* The people then just emerging from ignorance, and the darkness of popery, were many of them incapable of reading; but in the present day the case is very different. The number of persons that are now unable to read, is comparatively very small; and if all the opportunities of acquiring that ability were properly improved, the number would be still less. It is incumbent upon those who attempt to support this argument, to ascertain the number of persons, in their respective congregations, who are in this predicament; but this is a work they shrink from, probably from a conviction that the result would militate against their favourite practice. We shall, however, hazard a conjecture upon this subject; and probably we

* That this mode of singing was first introduced into religious worship soon after the reformation, and that it was then considered only as a temporary regulation, appears from the Directory published by the *Assembly of Divines*, at Westminster, in 1644; in which the following rules for psalm singing were enjoined.

"It is the duty of Christians to praise God publicly by singing of "psalms, together, in the congregation, and also privately in the "family. In singing of psalms the voice is to be audibly and gravely "ordered; but the chief care must be to sing with understanding "and with grace in the heart, making melody unto the Lord. That "the whole congregation may join herein, every one that can read "is to have a psalm book, and all others, not disabled by age, or "otherwise, are to be exhorted to learn to read. But *for the present*, "where *many* in the congregation cannot read, it is convenient that "the minister, or some fit person appointed by him and the other "ruling officers, do read the psalm, line by line, before the singing "thereof."

shall not deviate much from the truth, by supposing one person in ten, upon an average, or a tenth part of the whole, unable to read. Of this tenth part, it may fairly be concluded, that one half, either from a want of voice, or some other impediment, are incapable of singing, and consequently can derive no benefit from the present mode. Hence the persons to whom this argument can apply, are reduced to a twentieth part of the whole.

Thus by comparing the defects of this practice with the advantages arising from it, we find the operation of the former to that of the latter, as nineteen to one. We believe the fact would justify us in assuming a greater ratio, but, taking it in this proportion, the case stands thus;—here are nineteen persons compelled to unite in perpetuating an absurd custom,—and for what purpose? Why truly, that the twentieth may have an opportunity of joining in the same absurdity.

From these considerations we are led to suspect, that an attachment to this mode of singing, proceeds more from an inveterate prejudice in favour of a long established custom, than from a hope of obtaining any real advantage by its continuance.* Whether our suspicions be

* It is somewhat curious to remark the tenacious zeal with which this practice is defended by some dissenters, who, at the same time, do not fail to reprobate the rubrick of the established church, because it directs the people to repeat the confession, and some of the prayers, after the minister, in an audible voice. Now, in this latter case, the sentences are so short, and are repeated in such quick succession, that the sense suffers no interruption; but in the former,

well founded; or the contrary, or from whatever motive the practice is continued, its effect is the same; and until it is abolished, every attempt to render the practice of psalmody respectable, must be ineffectual.

We flatter ourselves, however, that a due consideration of the effects of this practice, will lead to a conviction of its impropriety, and consequently to its abolition. Under the influence of this hope, we shall proceed to some farther remarks upon the performance of this duty. In order, as far as possible, to accommodate those persons who cannot read, we would adopt the mode, recommended by Dr. WATTS, of reading the psalm through, previously to its being sung. By this method, those who cannot read would have an opportunity of hearing the psalm to a greater advantage, and of understanding it much better, than they possibly could by the common practice of retailing out the lines in pairs. This method will also give others a sufficient time to find the psalm, or hymn, in their books, before the singing begins. When it is thought proper to omit any part of a psalm, such parts only should be read as are intended to be sung; and, in such cases, this method would direct the singers which stanzas they are to sing, and which to

the sense is always interrupted, and sometimes totally destroyed. The inconsistency of such persons is truly reprehensible; for they seem to possess, and to act under the influence of that spirit of bigotry, which in others they effect to condemn. Such persons may fairly be ranked with those described in the gospel, "who strain at "a gnat, and swallow a camel."

omit.* But it is needless to dwell upon the advantages resulting from a practice, the utility of which is generally acknowledged, and, perhaps, the only reason why it is not generally adopted, is because it intrenches too much upon the time. It should, however, be recollected, that by the common method of parcelling out the lines, a greater portion of time is lost, without answering any good purpose whatsoever.

We shall now return to the music, or that part of the duty which more immediately concerns the singers; and we are properly led, in the first place, to consider the arrangement of the parts. In almost all places where this duty is conducted by a company, they sing, or attempt to sing, in four parts, consisting of a bass, tenor, contra-tenor, and treble. In choral music, where every part is, in its turn, at least, a principal, this disposition is very proper;† but in psalmody, where there is only one principal melody, to which all the other parts ought to be subservient, the parts should be arranged in a different order. In psalm tunes the principal melody should always predominate, because this is the part in which the congregation must join; but in the common

* It has lately become fashionable, in some places of worship, to read two or three stanzas of a psalm, and to sing the rest. For this practice there is no apparent reason; unless it be that the reader possesses, and wishes to display an antipathy to music.

† In psalmody, however, it is evident that two, or three parts, are preferable to four. But of this we shall speak more fully hereafter.

practice this melody is appointed to the tenor, while the treble, as well as the contra-tenor, which in psalmody are only auxiliary parts, are frequently predominant; and hence the leading part, being obscured by the other parts rising above it, becomes unintelligible to the people in general. In order to remove the inconveniencies which arise from this arrangement, we conceive it would be advisable for *all* the treble voices, together with the principal leaders, and the congregation at large, to join in the principal melody; while the accompanying, or auxiliary parts, if any such be admitted, are sung by tenor voices only. It is necessary, at the same time, to appoint such a number of voices to the bass, as will render it sufficiently powerful, and distinct, to be heard and understood by the congregation at large; so that those whose voices are adapted to that part, may be enabled to join in it, instead of singing the principal melody an octave below, as is too frequently the case. By this arrangement the leading part and the bass would form the two extremes of the harmony, and consequently both those parts would become intelligible to the hearers in general, who then might join in either part, as best suited their voices.

Here, doubtless, it will be objected, that if all the treble, and a great proportion of the tenor voices be united in the same part, such union will generate a perpetual consecution of octaves. This we readily admit, and at the same time freely confess, that we are unable to point out an effectual remedy, unless the congregation at large were precluded from joining in this duty, which

would completely counteract the design of the institution, as well as render nugatory all our attempts to improve the practice. But the effect of this arrangement is no other than what is always heard in every place of worship where the singing is general. Those of the congregation who join in this duty, consisting of men, women, and children, do always unite the tenor and treble voices in the same melody. The same thing takes place were the music is led by an organ, without any select company of singers; for in this case, the principal melody is always played in the treble octave, while, perhaps, the greater part of the congregation are joining the same melody an octave lower.* Hence it appears, that this objection applies, not merely to our arrangement, but to all congregations where the people, in general, join in the duty of singing. Nor does this method introduce any impropriety that did not exist before; for it only prevents some of the treble voices from joining in an auxiliary part, while the others are singing the principal melody; a practice that oftentimes creates confusion, and never produces a good effect. Under this head it may be observed, that if any intermediate part be introduced, it should be regularly carried on, at least till the tune is completed; for it is peculiarly disagreeable to hear a person break out abruptly, with a few notes of an extraneous part, and to discontinue it, almost immediately,

* The same objection applies, in fact, to the organ itself; for the diapasons, principal, fifteenth, and some other stops that are octaves to each other, are commonly used together; yet their united effect seldom offends a musical ear.

in the same abrupt manner. Every thing of this kind therefore, should be carefully avoided.

As we would not pass over unnoticed any circumstance that is connected with this duty, we shall just mention the method of pitching the tunes. In those places where there is an organ, the tune is given out by the organist; the most advantageous method of doing which, has been already pointed out. Where there is no organ, the tune ought not to be left to the accidental pitch of the leader's voice, but a pitch-pipe, or tuning fork, should be used, and the sound taken from it; taking care, however, to give the tone as softly as possible. In some places, the sound is not only given by a pipe, but the full chord of the key is repeated aloud by the whole company, with a formality that is very disagreeable. In other places, when the sound is given by a pipe, it is communicated by the singers, from one to another in succession, so that by the time it has made its rotation round the pew, it has oftentimes considerably varied from the original sound; when this is the case, it is not only disagreeable, but destructive of the end. Sometimes this business is deferred till the very last moment, so that when the psalm ought to begin, this formal preparation remains to be gone through, and, operating as a kind of disappointment, it never fails to produce a bad effect. There can be no necessity for all this preparation; the sound of the pipe appears quite sufficient, but if it be repeated by any of the voices, it should be in a tone that is scarcely audible to the congregation at large.

many congregations, however, are very defective in this particular. That to which we here principally allude, is not the *absolute*, but the *relative* time, or that proportion which the several notes ought to bear to each other. A strict attention to this is absolutely necessary; for if the time be neglected, the voices will very rarely move together. In many places, some one of the leading singers is appointed to beat the time, or to exhibit some visible mark of its division; but this is certainly unnecessary; for if the principal singers accustom themselves to sing strictly in time, the congregation at large, with a proper degree of attention, may soon acquire a habit equally correct; and without such attention, the act of beating the time will be altogether useless.

With respect to the absolute time, or that degree of speed in which the tune is carried on, and by which the relative time is regulated, there are various opinions. It may be observed, that in the early part of the last century, the effect of the music, in almost every worshipping assembly, was much injured by singing too slow, every note being extended to a disagreeable and tedious length. This practice was for a considerable time the subject of complaint, and was justly censured by many pious and judicious persons. In order to avoid this censure, the singers of the present day seem to have fallen into the contrary extreme, and by running over their notes with too much rapidity equally injure the effect. It is therefore evident, that a medium rate of time, would, in general, be much better than either extreme; it will, however, be very proper to vary the rate of time according to the

subject, and tendency of the words. But, after all that can be said, this part of the business must be left to the discretion of those who have the management of it.

There is one circumstance, however, which we must not neglect to mention. It is a constant practise in many congregations, to make a kind of pause at the end of every line, either by protracting the last note beyond its limited time, or by making a short rest between the lines. Hence the regular measure is broken,—the sense of the words is frequently disjoined,—and the people left at an uncertainty when the succeeding line is to commence. This practice should be abolished, except in those cases where the words require a pause; and when any rest is introduced, the measuse of it should be strictly observed.

The effect which the duty of singing in religious worship ought to produce, is oftentimes injured by an improper extension of the voice. When a person exerts his utmost strength in singing, his voice unavoidably becomes harsh and disagreeable, and very frequently unmanageable and out of tune. A mean strength of voice, between the soft and the loud, should be generally observed by all who attempt to sing. This degree of strength, in our music books, is commonly denoted by the technical term *Mezzo Voce*, or half voice; and a person who does not, in general, observe this direction, can never properly increase, or diminish, the strength of his voice when the subject requires such a variation. In many of our modern psalm tunes, we meet with changes from soft to loud, and *vice versa*, which are denoted by

the terms *Piano* and *Forte*. These changes too frequently and injudiciously introduced, have brought with them a long train of improprieties, which do not fail to render our church music mean and contemptible.

When these variations of strength are introduced, they seem to arise merely from the whim, or caprice of the composer; upon his judgment, however, the performers, in general, appear to place an implicit confidence; for his directions are commonly followed, without attending to the effect that they frequently produce. The consideration of this particular case, so far as it relates to the composer, must, for the present, be deferred; but as the regulation of these variations, in psalmody, depends chiefly upon the performers, we shall here add a few remarks upon the subject, as it relates to them.

In many of the modern psalm tunes, the third line is marked to be sung *soft*, to which the fourth is made to form a direct contrast; but why the third line of a stanza should be sung soft, rather than the first, second, or fourth, seems difficult to assign a reason. Indeed it frequently happens, that the third line of a stanza may with propriety be sung soft; but it is very probable that in the next, or some succeeding stanza, the case will be quite the reverse. Therefore the constant application of the terms *piano* and *forte* to any particular part of a tune, except accidentally, must be improper, and is oftentimes productive of effects bordering upon absurdity.*

* As an example of this kind, we have selected two stanzas from Dr. WATTS's Verson of Psalm 148th.

When the music is extended from the beginning to the end of a psalm, or hymn, the particular strength of voice with which every strain should be sung, may with propriety be pointed out, and marked by the composer; but when one, and the same tune is to be applied to different stanzas, this regulation must be left to the judgment of the performer; or, if any mark of direction be at all necessary, it ought to be prefixed to the words, and not to the music.

In some tunes, the last two lines are first sung soft, and then repeated aloud; in which case some degree of impropriety is unavoidable; for the same words can never be applicable to two extremes of the voice. Sometimes also a line, or a part of a tune, is appointed to be sung by the women and children, who are afterwards joined

STANZA IV.

Awake, ye tempests, and his fame
In sounds of dreadful praise declare;
And the sweet whisper of his name,
Fill ev'ry gentler breeze of air.

STANZA X.

Wide as his vast dominion lies,
Make the Creator's name be known;
Loud as his thunder shout his praise,
And sound it lofty as his throne.

In the first of these stanzas, the third and fourth lines may with propriety be sung soft; but to sing those of the other stanza in the same manner, would be completely ridiculous.

by the whole congregation. When the part first allotted to the women is not repeated by the whole, the people at large are confined to a part of the words only, the sense therefore, with respect to them, is incomplete; and when the sense is not thus interrupted, the only effect of the practice, if it produce any effect at all, is to draw the attention from the subject of the words, and to attach it merely to the sound.

Here we cannot fail to remark, that the very persons who, a few years since, were constantly exclaiming against antiphonal singing, as improper, or even unlawful; are now fallen into a practice that involves in it all the impropriety of that mode of singing, with very few, if any of its advantages. Antiphonal, or responsive singing, under proper regulations, may be admitted with propriety, and produce a very good effect; but responsive singing can never be strictly proper, unless the words be particularly adapted to that purpose; therefore the modern application of this mode of singing, must fail in its effect, especially when the sense of each responsive part is incomplete.

Correct pronunciation, articulation, and expression, in a particular manner demand the attention of singers in general, and ought not, by any means, to be overlooked by the psalmodist. The consideration of these particulars, which indeed may all be included in the general term expression, will necessarily expand our remarks in a considerable degree; we shall therefore pass them over for the present, and appropriate a subsequent section entirely to the elucidation of these subjects.

In the common practice of modern psalmody, another very disagreeable effect is frequently produced by improper repetitions. Much of the impropriety that arises from this source, attaches to the composer,* or to the person who selects the music; but there are many cases wherein such impropriety might easily be avoided by the performer, if he would exercise a proper degree of attention. When a part of a line is set to be repeated, there is no necessity to take the words always in the same part of the line. If the first two or three syllables are set to be repeated, and such a repetition of the words be improper, the tune may be carried on to the fourth, fifth, or sixth syllable, or until the repetition can be made with propriety. In some cases a note may be divided into two; or, on the contrary two, or more notes may be united together; so that a syllable more, or less, may enter into the repeated part, when the sense of the words requires such an alteration. No certain rules can be given, in this case, but such as are liable to a variety of exceptions; it may, however, be observed, that a word ought never to be divided, and a part of it only repeated: indeed such an impropriety can never be necessary, although it is often admitted.† In general, repetitions

* In our remarks upon the composition of psalm tunes, it may be necessary to drop some farther hints upon this subject; as well as upon that of responsive singing.

† That the generality of performers fall into improprieties of this kind, cannot much be wondered at; when we see, in some modern collections of psalm tunes, similar absurdities published, and perpetuated, under the sanction of names, which ought not to have been prostituted to such a purpose.

ought to be managed so as to render the most emphatical words the most conspicuous, and to increase the force and energy of the language. When this effect cannot be produced, repetitions become injurious, and ought not to be introduced.

One thing more falls naturally under our notice, which, although it forms no part of the duty itself, is intimately connected with it. This is the situation, and attitude of the singers. Probably this may be considered, by some persons at least, as an insignificant article; but perhaps it may be made to appear, that more depends upon it than is generally imagined. In many places of worship, the leading singers are situated near the middle of the building, and arranged round a table, with their faces towards the center, and consequently the direction of their voices converging to a point within the pew. This arrangement is not only disadvantageous, but in some respects ridiculous; and were it not so common, would not fail to produce some ludicrous sensations.* The leading singers, undoubtedly, ought to be situated near one extremity of the building, and arranged in such manner as to bring the whole congregation, or as much of it as possible, within their view; to do this, they should form an arch of a circle, or three sides of a polygon, whose center nearly coincides with that of the place. Six voices in this situation, would produce an effect

* Those who have seen a company of harvestmen, collected into a ring, and vociferating their thanks for largesses they have received, will not be at a loss for a comparison.

superior to that of ten equal voices situated in the manner above described.

It is now become a general custom for the leading singers to stand during the time of their performance, while, in many places of worship, the congregations at large indulge themselves upon their seats. We do not presume to say that there is any thing criminal is sitting, but still it carries with it such an appearance of irreverence as ought not to be encouraged. All those who actually sing, most undoubtedly ought to stand, not only for the sake of decency, but for various other reasons. It is well known to those who practice singing, that a person has a much greater command of his voice, and can use it to a much greater advantage, when he is standing than when he is sitting; in that attitude also the voice meeting with less obstruction from the pews, and other surrounding objects, is more freely conveyed to the distant parts of the place.

From the preceding considerations it appears, that the following regulation may be adopted with propriety. That the leading singers be placed, as before described, so as to see, and be seen by as many of the congregation as possible,—that not only these, but every person who attempts to sing with an audible voice, do it in a standing posture, and direct themselves, as far as convenience will permit, towards the principal singers,—while those who do not join vocally may continue to keep their seats; although it would appear more decent, and becoming if

the whole were to stand.* If this plan were adopted, the leading singers would be much better heard, and understood,—the voices of the whole would be more freely expanded through the place,—and the general effect greatly increased. At the same time, if any person through inattention, or otherwise, continued to sing in an improper manner, he would be more easily discovered, and consequently his errors might be pointed out and rectified.

* In a small tract lately published, the writer undertakes to recommend "the practice of sitting while singing the praises of God in "public worship."

The arguments adduced in support of this position, are too futile to merit notice; we shall however just mention one or two of them. It is alledged that "sitting is the most natural and easy posture." From this we may infer that the writer is no singer, for otherwise he would have known that standing to sing, is a more natural and pleasant posture than sitting.—He also says, that "sitting is a sign of a "privileged state." To this we may reply, that if *indulgence in indolence* can be considered as a privilege, this assertion may be admitted. But this is not the privilege of a Christian.

SECTION V.

OF MUSICAL PRONUNCIATION, ARTICULATION, AND EXPRESSION.

MUSICAL expression is the method of conveying the subject and design of a piece of music, to the mind of the hearer. Or, as Mr. AVISON defines it,* "it is a "strong and powerful application of *air* and *harmony* to the intended subject." EXPRESSION in music, so far as it relates to the performer, may be compared to delivery in oratory; and, when it is applied to vocal music, must include, or pre-suppose a knowledge of articulation, and correct pronunciation.

By attending to the manner in which singing is performed, in many of our worshipping assemblies, we shall find, that, not only expression, in the proper sense of the word, but articulation, and correct pronunciation, are either totally neglected, or not properly understood. In all the books of instruction that have come under our

* Essay on Musical Expression, page 40.

notice, we do not find any particular illustration of this subject; nor is it ever mentioned but in a general and cursory way. It therefore appears necessary to be the more explicit in our observations upon it.

We shall, in the first place, make some remarks upon musical pronunciation, as being the first step towards expression; and it will be necessary to enter somewhat largely into this part of the subject, not only because it is so much neglected, but because it is, perhaps, the only part that will be attended to by the generality of singers.

Those who wish to acquire a tolerable degree of perfection in musical pronunciation, should carefully attend to correct, and good speakers; and having thereby attained a correct mode of speaking, they should endeavour to apply the same kind of pronunciation in singing. This general rule, however, will prove insufficient; for, strange as it may appear, it is a certain fact, that many persons who speak, and read correctly, oftentimes fall into the greatest improprieties of pronunciation, when they apply the same words to music.

In order to prevent any misconception, and to set the matter in as clear a light as possible, we shall point out some of those improprieties which frequently occur amongst psalm singers in general; and, as we proceed, shall lay down some particular rules for their direction. Here let it be understood, that we do not mean to confine our remarks merely to those who conduct the singing, but to apply them to the congregations at large, at least

to all those who attempt to join in this branch of religious worship.

There is no defect of pronunciation more common, than that of giving an improper sound to the vowels. Very frequently the sound of one vowel is substituted for another,—some persons get into a habit of sounding all the vowels alike,—others, perhaps, begin the sound properly, but, unless the note be a very short one, they change the sound of the vowel before the time of the note is expired, so that, upon the same note, we oftentimes hear the sound of two vowels successively. This impropriety of pronunciation becomes much more observable in divisions. When the sound of a vowel is repeated in the successive notes of a division, it frequently undergoes several variations,—sometimes it is sounded with some consonant prefixed, and still more frequently with the aspiration. Indeed, amongst common singers, we seldom hear a divison, even of three or four notes, without the aspiration being prefixed to each, so that it resembles laughing rather than singing. Sometimes also the aspiration is introduced upon a single note, by making a kind of beat in the middle of it; this is more commonly done when one note succeeds another in unison, or ascending.* All these improprieties should be guarded

* The improprieties which some singers introduce into religious worship, by adhering to their accustomed modes and habits of pronunciation, need only to be pointed out, to be relinquished. Incredible as it may appear, in the plain notes of the Old 100th psalm, we have many times heard the first line pronounced literally as follows:

against, every vowel should have the same sound which would be given to it in speaking, according to the best modes of pronunciation; and the sound of every syllable should remain whole and entire, upon every note to which it is applied.

In psalm tunes long divisions are unnecessary and improper; but slurs of two, and divisions of three or four notes, are almost unavoidable. In the successive notes of these, the sound of the vowel should be repeated without the aspiration; and while the *vocal* sound of each succeeding note is distinctly marked, the *literal* sound of the vowel should, if possible, remain entire and undivided. This, perhaps, is a degree of perfection which very few common singers acquire; but they should endeavour to approach as near to it as possible, and by carrying the sound of the vowel only, from note to note, to render the divisions smooth, and agreeable to the ear. And it may be farther observed, that the aspiration should never be used in singing, except in those cases where it is admitted in speaking.

There are some persons, who, in singing, draw the termination of one word into the beginning of the next; this indeed may more properly be considered as a defect

"A-hall pe-he-ple that on a-hearth do-ho dwe-hell." And that similar absurdities frequently occur in our worshipping assemblies, every attentive observer must admit

As improprieties of this kind more commonly take place in divisions, we have given an example, or two, of that kind, with the proper and improper pronunciation to each.—Fig. 1.

in articulation, but when the next succeeding word begins with a vowel, it affects the pronunciation, and oftentimes it appears as if such vowel had a consonant prefixed. Others contract a habit still more disagreeable, and actually prefix the sound of some particular consonant to every word that begins with a vowel.* This mode of pronunciation is very offensive to a hearer; at the same time, many of the persons who practise it, seem to be insensible of their error, and consequently are not easily convinced of its impropriety.

Many of the errors which occur in musical pronunciation, arise from the sources above mentioned. There are, however, a few particular cases which ought to be attended to, and which, because they are frequently neglected, we shall endeavour to point out.

It has been given as a rule, that the letter *y*, at the end of a word, should be sounded like *e*. This rule is pretty generally known and adopted; but it is sometimes misapplied; for all monosyllables,† and words accented on the last syllable, are exceptions to it. It should therefore be observed, that when the accent falls upon the *y*, it should retain its own proper sound; but in all other cases it should be sounded like *e*.

* When a word begins with a vowel, some persons prefix the sound of *l*, or *t*; but the sounds of *n*, or *y*, are more frequently used, although they are still more disagreeable to the hearer.

† When the pronoun *my*, occurs twice in the same sentence, it may not be improper to pronounce it the second time like *me*; but this is not absolutely necessary.

In pronouncing the article *the*, it is usual to sound the *e* like the broad *a*; this rule is very proper in some cases, but it has its exceptions, for when the next following word begins with a vowel, the *e* should retain its proper sound.

Once more we would observe, that when a word ends in *le*, as humble, trouble, &c.; and also in all passive participles derived from verbs ending in *le*, as humbled, troubled, &c.; the sound of the *e* should be dropt, and the word pronounced without it, as humbl', humbl'd, &c. This is effected by raising the tip of the tongue to the roof of the mouth before the sound commences, and keeping it in that position as long as the sound continues. There are very few persons in our worshipping assemblies, who properly attend to this rule in singing, although they *always*, perhaps imperceptibly, adopt it in speaking.

More might be said on this part of the subject, but the preceding remarks, if duly attended to, will be sufficient to remove many of those improprieties of pronunciation, with which many of our modern psalmodists are chargeable.

A singer that has acquired a mode of pronunciation tolerably correct, will seldom be very deficient in articulation; but as improprieties in this case, as well as in pronunciation, sometimes occur, we shall drop a few hints upon this branch of expression.

Articulation consists not merely in giving each syllable its proper sound, but requires that while every word is

distinctly pronounced, so as to be perfectly understood, it may not diminish the musical effect. Singers in general, frequently deviate on one side, or the other; and either by attending to the sound, to the neglect of the words, or the contrary, render the articulation indistinct, or the music unpleasant.

Some, by attending only to the sound, fall into a slovenly manner of speaking the words, or rather of not speaking them at all; but by drawing the end of one note into the beginning of the next, render both the words and the music indistinct, and unintelligible.

Others, by endeavouring to avoid this disagreeable mode of singing, fall into the opposite extreme, pronouncing every syllable in a manner so harsh, and uncouth, as destroys, in a great degree, the effect of the music. This last mentioned practice, among modern musicians, is, not improperly, though rather indelicately, termed *mouthing*.

The true, and proper mode of articulation, lies between these two extremes; both of which a singer should be careful to avoid. The words should not be pronounced abruptly, but the sound of every syllable should begin, and *end*, with that of the note to which it is set. In general, care should be taken to express the words distinctly, and smoothly; so as, on the one hand, to be

perfectly understood, and on the other, so as not to injure the musical tone of the voice.*

Although expression, generally considered, includes pronunciation, and articulation, as before observed, yet it comprehends something more; and in its strict and proper sense, may be said to be an energetic display of those passions, and affections, which the united effects of the words, and the music, are calculated to inspire. Here the general design of the words must be constantly attended to, and the particular emphasis of every sentence strictly observed; a proper degree of force † must be given to all emphatical words; while those that are merely expletive, should be more gently touched, so, indeed, as to answer their proper design; but never to appear as a prominent part of the sentence.

All accented syllables ought to correspond with the accent of the music; and more particularly ought they to do so, when they are in any degree emphatical. This

* Many modern performers of secular music, have adopted a method of *sliding* from note to note, and connecting the intervals by an affected introduction of unmeaning chromatic passages. Hence that energy and dignity of expression, which ought to characterize every species of music, is degenerated into the contemptible effeminacy of an eunuch's yell.

We hope this fashionable folly will never find its way into religious worship.

† By force here, we do not understand *strength of voice* merely; but a just and powerful expression of those affections, which the sentiment is intended to convey.

coincidence of the accents depends chiefly upon the composer; but when the same music is sung to different words, inaccuracies, in this respect, are frequently unavoidable; the bad effect of which, however, may in some degree be removed by a judicious performer. When the musical accent coincides with an unaccented syllable, it should be rendered obscure in the performance; and, on the contrary, it should be particularly marked, when it falls upon an accented, or emphatical part of a sentence.

The effect of musical expression is similar to that of speaking; and "it will naturally occur to the reader," as Mr. AVISON observes,* "how commanding the power "of expression may be found, from a different manner "of reading the same author; especially in poetry, where "a just and spirited emphasis is so highly essential to "point out those interesting strokes, which are more pe-"culiarly designed to delight the imagination and affect "the heart. But how short of this design, is the best "wrote poem, whether we hear it rehearsed with wild "and vehement accents, or repeated in a cold and life-"less *monotone!* In either of these cases, our disgust, "or weariness of attention, will be found in proportion "to the beauties of the author thus abused. And just "thus it fares with an injudicious performance of a fine "musical composition."

Hence we may conclude, that the proper effect of ex-

* Essay on musical expression, page 106.

pression, in vocal music, can only be produced by a strict attention to the sense and design of the words,—that, in order to perform this part of religious worship with propriety, the force and power of the subject must be felt, as well as understood,—and, consequently, that the melody of the voice will fail in its effect, if it be not accompanied with the melody of the heart.

SECTION VI.

ON THE COMPOSITION OF PSALM TUNES.

WHATEVER degree of improvement may be made in the general practice of singing, the performance of it, as a religious duty, must fail of its proper effect, unless an entire reformation take place with respect to the music that is introduced into our religious assemblies. That solemnity of stile which ought to characterise all church music, seems to be banished from divine worship, and its place occupied by a puerile and unmeaning levity, which not only disgusts the rational hearer, but exposes the duty to a certain degree of contempt.

If we examine many of our modern collections of psalm tunes, very few will be found that are properly adapted to the purposes of divine worship. Here and there we meet with an old, and respectable tune, but we frequently find both the melody and the harmony so defaced by, what are called, modern improvements, that the effect of the original composition is, in a great mea-

sure, destroyed. This practice of modernizing old tunes, not only discovers a defect of judgment, but exhibits an appearance of wilful misrepresentation; for these modernizers, while they obtrude upon the public, their own crude ideas, seldom fail to sanction the alteration with the name of the original composer.*

There is another class of tunes, to be found in the same collections, whose origin bears a more recent date. Here we frequently meet with false, and undigested harmony, and with melodies so light and trifling, that they ought never to be applied to the sacred purposes of devotion. Melodies are oftentimes introduced, that seem to be made up of scraps, and pieces selected from other compositions, and injudiciously connected together, so that it is difficult to discover even the appearance of design. Such tunes, like the daw in borrowed feathers, must always appear contemptible, and are not only incompatible with the solemnity of religious worship, but are totally unfit for any purpose whatsoever.

Sometimes also, popular song tunes, and ballad airs, are applied to words of the most solemn kind, and admitted into the worship of God. We readily admit that tunes may be applied to sacred purposes with a good effect, which have been originally set to some of the more

* Many tricks of this kind have been played with the old 100th psalm tune; but neither the melody nor the harmony have been improved. The 104th psalm tune also, whose origin is ascribed to *Handel*, has undergone many alterations to its disadvantage.

serious kind of songs. But when any thing of this kind is attempted, two things should be duly considered;—first, that the style of those tunes be consistent with the solemnity of divine worship;—and secondly, that the songs from which such tunes are taken, have never been in common, or vulgar use. To these particulars very little attention has been paid; on the contrary, some of the most frivolous, as well as some of the most popular airs, have been admitted into religious worship; and the consequence is, that whenever any such tune is sung, the idea of the original words seldom fails to associate with it.*

This application, or rather misapplication, of song tunes to sacred purposes, is to be met with in almost all the worshipping assemblies of the Methodists. The practice, we believe, originated with Mr. WHITFIELD, undoubtedly with a good intention, but he was mistaken in the effect; and there is reason to think that much of the contemptuous treatment which he himself, as well as many of his followers, frequently met with, was owing to the *apparent* levity with which their religious duties were conducted. The novelty, however of this species of music, or, at least, of its use in religious worship, and perhaps its tendency to assimulate with the corrupt passions of mankind, rendered it, for a considerable time, very popular; hence, in compliance with the fashion of

* It gave us some degree of concern to find, in a recent publication, an old public house catch ("How great is the pleasure") set to be used in religious worship.

the times, the same practice has been adopted, in a greater, or less degree, by worshipping assemblies of almost every denomination. It can hardly be doubted, but the popularity which these tunes for a time obtained, has been one cause of introducing into religious worship, that puerile taste, and those contemptible compositions, of which we have already expressed our disapprobation.

In some modern publications, there is another class of psalm-tunes, which, although as musical compositions they may possess some degree of merit, seem to be destitute of that solemnity which ought to characterize all sacred music. Florid airs, and rapid movements, cannot with propriety be introduced into religious worship, even if the execution of them were practicable; nor can the flights of fancy which are too apparent, even in our best modern psalm tunes, produce those placid sensations which always accompany a true spirit of devotion.

It may not, perhaps, be an unprofitable digression, if we endeavour to trace this kind of psalmody to its source, and to discover the origin of the present reigning taste. Here indeed we have no certain data, the grounds of our inquiry therefore must be chiefly conjectural.

The wonderful effect produced by the oratorios of *Handel*, will be acknowledged by every person who has heard them well performed. Now it is very probable, that some well-meaning person may have conceived the idea of selecting some passages from those sublime compositions, and introducing them into religious worship,

in the form of psalm tunes, supposing that somewhat of a similar effect might be thereby produced. But it should have been considered, that in this case, the sum of the parts is *not* equal to the whole; for if the movements could be retained entire, the separate effect of each would fall far short of *that* produced in the connection.* Many attempts of this kind have been actually made, and, in some cases, with a good effect; but these selections have sometimes been made by unskilful hands, who, to accommodate the music to the words, or for some other reasons, have admitted alterations, and additions of their own, forming together a heterogeneous mixture that seldom pleases, especially when associated with the idea of the original.

That selections of this kind may, in some particular instances, be introduced into religious worship with a

* The truth of this observation is evinced by many of the public performances of music in the metropolis. Where, instead of an entire and complete *Oratorio*, are frequently given out, what are called, *Grand Selections*, consisting of the most favourite parts of different compositions. These always fail of effect, as a whole, even if the selection be judiciously made. The effect produced by the complete oratorios of Samson, Judas Maccabeus, or the Messiah, can never be equalled by the best possible selection.

These pieces, moreover, are oftentimes very improperly selected. Not only is the effect of the performance injured by the incongruity of the successive parts; but we frequently have an intermixture of secular and sacred music. This is an impropriety that merits the severest censure, and ought never to be received by an audience, but with disapprobation. As an instance of this kind, we have actually heard the solemn chorus from *Israel in Egypt*, ("The Lord shall reign,") introduced between the acts of Acis and Galatea.

good effect, experience abundantly proves; but great care should be taken in the selection; the movements, if possible, or at least the subjects, ought to be preserved entire; and alterations, either in the melody or the harmony, should never be made, but in cases of absolute necessity; for even the most skilful musician ought to be very careful how he lays his innovating hand upon the work of a *Purcell*, or a *Handel*.

But besides the selections above alluded to, which have been made from different oratorios, we find that some psalmodists have endeavoured to imitate the *style* of those compositions, in various productions which may be called their own. How far short of their prototype the greater part of these imitations have fallen, need not be pointed out; but the best of them must fail in their effect, for the style itself, in general, is very different from that of good psalmody. It should be understood, that the effect produced by oratorio music, is strictly theatrical,—it is produced, in a great measure, by contrast,—and the mind is carried from one subject to another, by sudden transitions. Hence different passions are excited in quick succession, and we feel a kind of tumultuous pleasure, which leaves the senses in a state of perturbation. Could this kind of effect be produced in religious worship, in would rather hinder, than promote a spirit of devotion. The effect of good church music, on the contrary, is calculated to fix the mind in a state of constant serenity,—to check the operation of every turbulent passion,—and to inspire the soul with a sense of the elevated solemnity in which it is engaged.

That oratorio music, in general, is calculated to produce a theatrical effect, will scarcely be denied, although the style of some particular movements approach nearly to that of psalmody, and may, as has been already observed, be introduced into the worship of God, with some degree of propriety. It has also been observed, that the theatrical style, if it could be perfectly imitated, would be incompatible with the solemnity of religious worship. The various imitations, however, of this style, which have been introduced into our modern psalm tunes, have generally failed; and instead of producing that dignified effect which ought always to accompany sacred music, have fallen short of the effect that might reasonably have been expected from them. It is no less strange than true, that those passages which are the farthest removed from the proper style of church music, have most frequently been the subjects of imitation;—these have been followed by a secondary class of imitations, derived from marches and popular song tunes;—and an intermixture of all these seems to make up the greater part of our modern psalmody.

These causes, among others, have undoubtedly operated in producing that depraved taste, and those puerile productions, which are admitted into almost all our worshipping assemblies, and which have reduced our sacred music to a state of degradation, from which it will not be recovered without some difficulty and exertion.

But, leaving this digression, we shall return to our subject, and offer a few directions to regulate the com-

position of this species of sacred music; at the same time we shall endeavour to point out some of those improprieties with which our psalmody abounds, and which have a tendency to sink this branch of religious worship into contempt.

The most important characteristics of good psalmody, and which a composer ought to keep constantly in view, are SIMPLICITY and SOLEMNITY.

By simplicity we do not mean simple counterpoint merely, or that kind of composition wherein notes of equal measure are opposed to each other, note against note; but such a simplicity of style, and such a management both of the melody and harmony, as will render the performance easy, and the design intelligible; at the same time the rhythm should be strictly observed, so as to admit of a proper degree of force and energy in the expression. If, however, we examine the productions of many modern composers, we shall find that this simplicity has been very little attended to; but, instead thereof, a style has been adopted that is at once complex, difficult, and unintelligible.

Solemnity also is not only neglected but seems to be banished from our modern psalmody. Under this term we do not mean to include the ideas either of dulness and melancholy, on the one hand; or of external pomp and formality on the other. But by solemnity here, is to be understood that dignity which ought to pervade every act of religious worship,—which partakes, in some

degree, both of the *grave* and the *sublime*,—and which, in its effects, produces at one and the same time, a devout awe, and a placid cheerfulness.

To attain a tolerable degree of perfection in these particulars, requires a greater portion both of judgment and taste, than is generally imagined; for, as Mr. Avison observes,* "it will be found no easy matter to strike "out the true sublimity of style, which is proper to be "heard, when the mind is in a devout state."

Without pursuing these general observations any farther, we shall offer some particular rules to be observed in the composition of psalm tunes; and as we proceed, shall take occasion to point out some of the improprieties that ought to be avoided.

Mr. Avison advises,* that "when psalm tunes are sung "in parts, there should be no more than three; because "too complex an *harmony* would destroy the natural "air." It is readily admitted, that, in general, three parts are better than four; yet, we apprehend, four parts may sometimes be introduced with propriety, and with a good effect. On the other hand, we believe that two vocal parts, consisting only of the *canto fermo*, or leading part, and a bass, would be more intelligible to the generality of hearers, and at the same time, would, in effect, fall little short of music in three or four parts,

* Essay on Musical Expression, page 81. * *Ibid.* page 79.

especially where, upon particular occasions, the interior harmony could be filled up by an organ.

All the treble voices, as we have already observed, ought to join in the principal melody; that part therefore should be set in the treble cliff. The bass should be set in its own proper cliff; and if there be any intermediate parts, they ought always to be written in the tenor, or contra-tenor cliffs. For without this distinction, it will be difficult to ascertain the particular octave* in which the part is to be sung.

* In almost all our modern music, every part, except the bass, is written in the treble cliff. This custom, however fashionable, is certainly a very improper one; for it affords no direction whereby a performer can judge of the particular octave in which his part lies: it also tends to mislead a learner, who commonly finds it difficult to acquire a proper idea of the different octaves. We have known persons, who, although they had acquired some skill in the practice of music, could not conceive the difference between the treble and the bass octaves; but supposed that the G upon the second line of the treble, was in unison with the G in the fourth space of the bass; and were much surprised when they found they had cheated themselves of an octave.

It is, moreover, a fact not generally understood, or, at least, not usually attended to; that children when they first attempt to sing, or to imitate any melody that is sung to them by a *tenor voice*, commonly conceive their own voice to be in unison with that which they imitate, although it is in reality an octave above. When they hear the same melody played on an organ, they form a different conception of it, and do not suppose the instrument to be in unision with their own voice, unless it be actually so.

Thus one octave is frequently mistaken for another, and the error is in some cases confirmed by writing all the parts in the same cliff.

If we suppose the leading part to lie in the treble octave, that is, to be sung by treble voices, it ought always to predominate; for if any of the other parts be permitted to rise above it, the melody will be obscured, and in many cases destroyed; because the greater part of those who sing in religious worship, being led entirely by the ear, will of course follow the highest part, and form a melody compounded of the predominant notes. None of the parts therefore should ever rise above the principal. This is a rule invariably observed by every good organist, the principal melody being always played in the treble octave, and forms the predominant note of every chord.

Therefore to prevent mistakes of this kind, and to determine the particular octave in which every part ought to be sung, all the interior parts, in vocal music, should be set in the C cliff.

Probably it would be of considerable utility, if musicians in general, were to make use of some appropriate technical term, to distinguish every different octave. Thus, for instance, we might suppose the lower octave, from *Gamut* down to *double Gamut*, to be called the DOUBLE BASS OCTAVE. The next octave, from *Gamut* upwards, the BASS OCTAVE. The middle octave, from the fourth space of the bass, to the second line of the treble, the TENOR OCTAVE. The next octave, from the line on which the treble cliff is placed, to G in alt, the TREBLE OCTAVE. And the next, from G in alt, upwards, the TREBLE ALTO OCTAVE.

These five octaves would include all that is *necessary* in music, and if they were distinguished by these, or some other technical terms, they would undoubtedly be more definitive, and easier to be understood. Under this persuasion we have annexed a scale of them.—Fig. 2.

But in those places of worship where there is no organ, the principal melody, being commonly led by tenor voices, may be considered as lying in the tenor octave; and, in this case, it will be very difficult to keep all the other parts below it, unless the melody of each be confined within very narrow limits. The rule, however, ought to be strictly observed with respect to the bass, which should never rise above the leading part, even when that part is sung by tenor voices.

This rule seems to have been greatly neglected, for there is scarcely a modern psalm tune to be found, in which the bass does not sometimes predominate, the consequence of this is, that whenever the bass is uppermost, the people, in general, naturally follow it, instead of the leading part, so that the effect of the melody is, in many cases destroyed,* as well as the harmony inverted. If the

* Numberless instances of this kind, are to be met with in modern psalmody, and the effect of them may be observed, more or less, in almost every worshipping assembly. From among the multitude, we shall particularly point out one, that is frequently introduced.

In one of the most common cadences used in psalmody, when the leading part descends through the fourth, third, and second, into the key, the bass is frequently made to ascend from the fourth to the fifth of the key, making a third above the leading part, instead of a sixth below it. By this improper management, the harmony is inverted, while the congregation, in general, follow the bass into the fifth of the key, and then descend immediately to the second, forming thereby a melody as mean and contemptible as can well be conceived.

An example of this kind occurs in the tune called *Irish;* the last line of which is given,—Fig. 3. where No. 1 shews the parts as they are written; and No. 2, the leading part as it is frequently sung.

relative limitations above mentioned, were strictly attended to, and the bass always kept below the other parts, every bad effect, arising from this cause, would be perfectly done away, and both the melody and harmony would become more intelligible and easy.

This *relative* limitation, however, is not all that demands our attention; for, in all kinds of music, every part must also be confined within certain *absolute* limits, according to the nature and design of the composition, and the capacity of the voice, or instrument by which it is to be performed. In psalm tunes the leading part should lie within a moderate compass, so as not to exceed the extent of an ordinary voice. The same rule should be observed with respect to the bass; and of course the interior parts must be much more confined.* This rule has been too much neglected, for, in many cases the leading part descends too low, and the bass sometimes rises too high, for common voices to reach.

In all kinds of music, care should be taken not to misplace the accent; but in psalmody, more especially,

Another impropriety occurs in the first line of the same tune, upon the third note; where, when the leading part is sung by a treble voice, the harmony is inverted, and the fifth is converted into a disallowable fourth.

* We apprehend, the principal melody ought to lie within the compass of an octave and fourth, viz. from D, to G in alt. The bass ought seldom to exceed an octave and fifth, viz. from *Gamut*, to D in the tenor octave. The interior part, or parts, must be confined within much narrower limits.

errors of this kind should be strictly guarded against; because the metrical construction of the words, renders them particularly conspicious. The accent of the music should, *if possible*, be made to correspond with that of the words; but where the tune is to be sung to different stanzas, this cannot always be effected, because, by the admission of different feet into the poetry, the accent frequently varies its situation.*

Another impropriety that we meet with in psalm tunes, arises from an injudicious use of divisions. In many cases, four or five notes may be applied to one syllable with considerable advantage, and produce an agreeable and proper effect. Sometimes indeed, divisions of this sort can scarcely be avoided, without contracting the melody; but long divisions, as we have already hinted, ought never to be introduced. In psalm tunes, no division should include much more than a bar of time, or consist of quick notes; for divisions of a greater length tend to injure the expression, and rapid movements are impracticable in a worshipping assembly. If a psalm tune were applied to one stanza only, or if the music were extended to the end of the psalm, so that it might always be sung to the same words, a composer would

* The variety of measures, and the diversity of feet, that we meet with in some collections of hymns, frequently render the task of a composer very difficult; and sometimes involve in themselves, a degree of impropriety. The dactyl and anapest seem scarcely compatible with the solemnity of religious worship; and double rhymes are seldom admitted into sacred music with a good effect.

have a much greater scope for his invention, and might sometimes, with propriety, introduce divisions of a greater length. But when the tune includes only one, or two stanzas, and must be repeated to different words, no such liberties should be taken; for it will oftentimes happen, that, in some of the stanzas, the division will fall upon an unemphatical syllable, perhaps upon an article, or mere expletive, so that such division will not only be injurious to the effect, but introductive of a palpable absurdity.* Therefore whenever a composer wishes to introduce a division, he ought to examine throughout, the psalm, or hymn, to which it is to be sung, so that the division may properly apply to every stanza. It is also incumbent upon performers, as has been already observed, to be careful how they apply such tunes to different words.

In every kind of church music, and more especially in psalmody, all theatrical embellishments, and affected graces, should be avoided; yet on no account whatever, are our modern psalmodists more censurable than in this particular. An affectation of novelty has given birth to a variety of fantastical conceits, and the influence of fashion has introduced into our sacred music, the very refuse of the theatres. The exceptionable passages, of this kind, that are to be found in our modern psalm

* Those who will examine the collections of psalm tunes that have been lately published, and compare some of the tunes with different stanzas to which they are usually sung, will be constrained to admit the truth of this assertion. One example, of this kind, we have given Fig. 4.

tunes, are too numerous to be particularised; we shall, however, point out a few of them.

Preparatory to a cadence, and more commonly to a final close, the principal melody is frequently carried up to the sixth of the key, for the sake of descending by triple quavers into the third, and so on, through the second into the key. About half a century back, this phrase, as we may term it, was the favourite of the theatre. We believe it originated with Dr. ARNE, at least he adopted it in a variety of instances; and it was so much in fashion for a considerable time, that scarcely any popular song ever closed in any other form. Among theatrical composers, this phrase is now become obsolete; and probably would, long ago, have been buried in oblivion, had it not been introduced into our places of worship, where it is now become as general as it was formerly in the theatres. With respect to the passage itself, however pleasing it may be in secular music, it is hardly compatible with the solemnity of religious worship; and, indeed, triple quavers, or triple crotchets, should be very sparingly, if ever, admitted.

The last-mentioned passage, however, has undergone an alteration, for although it is generally written as formerly, yet, in practice, the middle note is commonly omitted, and the descent made by passing immediately from the sixth to the fourth, making an interval of a third, instead of the three successive notes. This alteration is much more exceptionable than the original; it is

nevertheless adopted by some *composers*, and written as it is usually sung.*

Another passage, somewhat akin to the preceding, but still more puerile and contemptible, we frequently meet with in modern psalm tunes. In the common cadence, where the melody descends from the fourth, through the third and second into the key, the first note is sometimes broken into two; the first half being made upon the fourth, and the other upon the second of the key, from whence it rises into the third.† This too is sometimes practised when it is not written, and never fails to produce a disagreeable effect.

There is another fashionable kind of musical phraseology, which we shall just notice; wherein the melody moves by successive thirds, slurred, and applied to the same syllable. Passages of this kind occur so frequently, and in such various forms, that it would be almost impossible to particularise them; we shall therefore only remark, that although such thirds may be sometimes admitted, yet a constant succession of them tends to render psalmody contemptible.

Sometimes upon a cadence, by way of *embellishment*, a crotchet is broken into four semiquavers, or a minim

* Two examples of this passage are given in Fig. 5, where No. 1 shews the original form, and No. 2 the alteration.

† An example of this passage is given in Fig. 6.

into four quavers, in various forms; these also seldom fail to produce a disagreeable effect.*

Here also may be pointed out, an improper use that is sometimes made of the *appoggiatura;* and from amongst many instances that might be produced, we shall select only one. When a strain is brought to a close upon the key, the final note is oftentimes retarded by an *appoggiatura* upon the seventh, that is upon the semitone below the key. This is certainly improper, and should never be admitted in psalmody; for the whole of the effect that it produces, is contrary to the spirit of sacred music.

All theatrical imitations, as well as those fantastical conceits that originate in the mind of the composer, should be entirely banished from religious worship; and a strict attention paid to that simplicity and solemnity, which are inseparable from good psalmody, and without which it can never appear respectable. If at any time, any embellishment be admitted, it should be such as is consistent with the style of sacred music; and even that should be confined principally to the symphony.

The preceding observations refer chiefly to the melody,

* To describe all the various passages referred to in this, and the preceding paragraph, would be exceedingly tedious; we have, however, given some examples in Fig. 7, No. 1, 2, 3, &c. which will convey a more perfect idea of them than any description. In all of which the most exceptionable parts are marked with an asterisk; and the comparison of their merits, or demerits, is left to the reader's judgment.

but as the harmony, in many cases, is equally defective, we shall offer a few remarks upon that part of the subject. Perhaps there is no species of music that requires a more strict adherence to the rules of harmony, than that of psalmody; because the simplicity of the style renders every deviation more perceptible than in compositions more complex and elaborate.

Whoever examines the psalmody of the present day, will necessarily be led to conclude, that the rules of harmony are either despised, or greatly neglected; for even consecutions of perfects, and what are usually termed disallowances, seem to be admitted without a scruple. Errors of this kind ought not to be tolerated in psalmody, because they are always distinguishable, and consequently disagreeable to a musical ear.

Another fault that attaches to our modern psalmodists, is the too frequent use of passing discords; while discords properly prepared, and resolved, are very seldom introduced. The latter, if judiciously managed, would tend to enrich the harmony; but the former oftentimes produces a contrary effect. Sometimes indeed a good melody, or a pleasing subject, can scarcely be preserved without the admission of passing discords; and, in such cases they are not only allowable, but necessary. Cases of this kind, however, very rarely occur in psalmody; yet we frequently hear the principal melody running through every letter in the scale, while the bass continues to repeat the same note in constant succession, producing an effect somewhat similar to the drone of a bagpipe.

Thus the bass is oftentimes deprived both of melody and expression; and instead of supporting the leading part, becomes an incumbrance to it; for instances may be found, in many modern psalm tunes, where even the simple melody of the leading part alone, would produce a better effect, than a combination of the melody and harmony of all the parts united.

Among the improprieties of our modern composers, we may also class the repetition of certain parts of the melody, by all the voices in unison, or in the octave. This seems to be an affected imitation of some passages in HANDEL'S choruses, where a succession of unisons are sometimes introduced, with a good effect; but it should be considered, that when such a passage is admitted by that great musician, it generally forms a contrast to some rich, or to some complicated harmony, that either immediately precedes, or follows it. Now in psalmody the simplicity of the harmony will not admit of such contrast, nor can a similar effect be produced without the assistance of a large band, composed of a great number of voices and instruments; it therefore generally fails when attempted by a small choir. Besides, the effect produced in this way is of the theatrical kind, and therefore unfit for the purposes of religious worship.

In psalm tunes, simplicity is as necessary in the harmony, as in the melody; and psalmodists, in general, would be more advantageously employed in studying, and applying the rules of harmonic construction, than in imitating those flights of genius which are frequently incompatible with good church music.

With respect to the style of psalmody, we have already made some remarks, and shall farther observe, that the style of the music should be regulated by a particular attention to the sentiment, or subject of the words. When a tune is intended for general application, or to be sung to all the different stanzas of a psalm, the genius and taste of the composer will, of course, be very much confined; for he must not only attend to the first stanza, but must compare his music with the whole psalm, so that it may, *if possible*, be adapted to every part of it.*

Many psalm tunes seem to have been composed without any regard to the words, except their metre; and in many more, the composer appears to have attended to the first stanza only. Hence, we not only find the music and the sentiment at variance, but are frequently led into inconsistencies by improper repetitions. When the repetition of a line, or a part of a line is intended, it should be compared with every stanza, and when it cannot be made with propriety in all of them, it should not be adopted.

Similar improprieties are oftentimes occasioned by introducing rests, abruptly, in the middle of a line. These, in some particular cases, may be proper; but much more frequently they are directly the contrary; and we shall seldom find a psalm that will admit of such rests, in the same part of every stanza.

* As a remedy to every inconvenience of this kind, two, or more tunes may be used; as has been before observed.

Fugues, or imitations, should be sparingly used in psalmody, because they are seldom well performed, especially by a large congregation; and they oftentimes occasion a kind of confusion that is disagreable. When any thing of this sort is introduced, the *point* should be plain and simple, and the subject preserved as nearly as possible; otherwise it loses its effect. It would also be advantageous, if it were always led by the principal melody; for, in many assemblies, when a fugue, or imitation, is led by the bass, the treble voices join with it, and this necessarily occasions a degree of confusion that ought, if possible, to be avoided. In this case also, the words should be strictly attended to, and the fugue carefully compared with every stanza to which it is intended to be sung; for without such attention, it would frequently lead to improper repetitions.

To what has been already said, we shall add some farther remarks upon the variation of the voice, or the use and application of the terms *piano*, and *forte*, in psalmody. These terms, in general, are very well understood, but are frequently misapplied; their application, in psalmody, as we have already observed, should be left to the performer, especially when the same tune is to be sung to several different stanzas. Perhaps a psalm is not to be found, where either of those terms can be applied, with propriety, to the same part of every stanza; it is therefore, extremely wrong to prefix either of them to a particular part of a tune, when, it is more than probable, that the words, in some cases, will require the contrary. When a tune is continued from the

beginning to the end of a psalm, so that it can be sung to those words only to which it is set, these variations may be marked with propriety; but then the sense of the words must regulate the application, and not the whim, or caprice of the composer, as seems to be the case in too many instances.*

From the preceding observation, we are naturally led to offer a few remarks on antiphonal, or responsive singing; with which we shall conclude this part of our remarks.

In the early part of the last century, many objections were made to this mode of singing, chiefly, we believe, because it was practised in the Romish church; these objections, however, seem to have been no better supported, than those which, for the same reason, were opposed to the use of musical instruments.

If antiquity may be urged in favour of any practice, responsive singing has an undeniable claim to that argument; for the first piece of sacred music that we find recorded in scripture, was of the responsive kind.† It was also practised in the Jewish worship, as is evident

* In Fig. 8, we have copied, at length, the melody of a hymn from a modern publication; which, at one view, exhibits an example of the capricious, and unmeaning use of the *piano*, as well as of ridiculous, and, if any thing deserves that appellation, vain repetition.

† Exodus xv. 1, 21.

from the construction of many of the psalms, as well as from the other parts of the Old Testament. And to this mode of singing the Apostle Paul probably alludes in his exhortation to the Colossians,* "Let the word of "Christ dwell richly in you, in all wisdom; *teaching and* "*admonishing one another* in psalms, and hymns, and "spiritual songs."

But the lawfulness of responsive singing is seldom disputed in the present day; on the contrary, some persons who formerly opposed it, seem now to be advocates in its favour; and many who once considered this mode of singing, as a kind of solemn trifling, are now, by an affected imitation of it, fallen into a practice really frivolous, and which frequently leads to gross improprieties.

We here allude to the mode adopted in some worshipping assemblies, where different parts of the same tune are appointed to be sung by the men and women alternately. This, however, as it is usually practised, is very different from responsive singing, properly so called; for these changes seem to be made merely to give a variety to the different parts of the air, and are oftentimes applied successively to the several stanzas of a psalm, or hymn, without any regard to the sense of the words.

Sometimes the same words are first sung by the men, and then repeated by the women, or the contrary; and when these repetitions are made in the different stanzas of a psalm, improprieties are almost unavoidable.

* Col. iii. 16.

In other cases, the words sung by one party, are not repeated by the other, and consequently the sense, with respect to each, is oftentimes incomplete, as has been already observed.

In some places of religious worship, they allot to the women's voices, almost all those passages which the composer has marked with the term *piano;* and these, in modern psalmody, are so numerous that imperfections cannot fail to occur very frequently. This misapplication of the term *piano*, probably arises from a mistaken idea of its *true* import. Many persons seem to suppose, that diminishing the *number* of voices, will produce the same effect as softening, or diminishing the *strength* of the whole; but this certainly is not the fact, as will soon appear to every one who may think proper to try the experiment.

All these fantastical modes of singing, being generally adopted without a due attention to the sense, and design of the words, ought to be laid aside, as incompatible with the solemnity of religious worship.

Responsive singing, however, does not consist in frequent changes of the voice from soft to loud, or the contrary; nor in the repetition of the same words by different voices, as some imitators of this kind of music seem to imagine; but in the regular performance of certain distinct, and complete sentences, by different voices alternately.

The ancient antiphonal singing was performed by two

separate choirs, each including a number of voices, and placed in opposition to each other; somewhat similar to the manner in which our cathedral service is now performed. There does not appear, however, to be any necessity for so much formality, and, we believe, this mode of singing may be successfully imitated, on a much smaller scale.

When any attempt is made to introduce this practice into religious worship, the different voices should be so placed, as to keep the alternate parts as distinct and unconnected with each other as possible; and if the leading parts were to be sung by tenor voices, and the responses by treble voices, or vice versa, it would certainly render the parts more distinct, and tend to heighten the general effect of the whole.

But the object which, in this mode of singing, demands our greatest attention, is the selection of words that are properly adapted to the purpose; for without this, the greatest improprieties will unavoidably happen. It is not necessary that the words be strictly in the form of a dialogue; but the sense of each part must be complete, and, at the same time, the response should be connected with, or in some degree dependent upon the leading part.

When the words are properly arranged, such music should be applied to them as particularly suits each part. The tenor voices should be accompanied by a bass; and if either the leading part, or the response be adapted to

the treble voices, they should be accompanied by a tenor, or contra-tenor, in the form of a bass. And it will add much to the effect, if after every response, or after a certain number of responses, all the parts join in chorus.* It is probable, however, that responsive singing will never be generally adopted, and it is doubtful whether it can be performed to advantage, without the accompaniment of an organ.

After all that can be said upon this part of the subject, much will depend upon the judgment and taste of the composer, as well as upon the care and skill of the performers; for unless the words be judiciously chosen,—the music properly adapted to them,—and the performance conducted with great care and circumspection, the effect will fail, and, in such cases, this mode of singing should not be introduced into religious worship.

* We cannot better exemplify our meaning, than by referring to the 136th psalm; which, undoubtedly, was originally adapted to this mode of singing. In this psalm, every verse forms a complete sentence, and the chorus follows both the leading part and the response.

SECTION VII.

CONCLUSION.

In our observations upon this subject, we have not only pointed out many errors, and improprieties that ought to be avoided; but have laid down such rules as appeared necessary to be adopted by all those who would wish to conduct this duty with propriety; and, in either case, have omitted no circumstance that appeared worthy of notice.

Convinced of the lawfulness of instrumental music in the worship of God, we again recommend the use of an organ, as an accompaniment to the voices, where the expense can be supported; confining its use, however, within such limits as are consistent with the solemnity of religious worship.

With the assistance of an organ, the singing may be

conducted by a single voice with some degree of propriety; but even with an organ, a good company of singers would be preferable, and produce a much better effect.

Where there is no organ, a large congregation can never be properly managed by a single voice; in that case, therefore, a company becomes necessary; the effect of which would be much improved by the addition of a violoncello, or other bass instrument.

But in whatever mode the duty may be conducted, it is absolutely necessary that the music be properly adapted to the words, so that by their joint operation the effect of the whole may be increased. Also, from every selection of music, we would wish to exclude all those paltry and ridiculous tunes that now disgrace our worshipping assemblies, and to adopt such only as are consistent with the solemnity of religious worship.

It were also to be wished that all congregations would sing without reading the psalms line by line; which method, with a little practice, would soon become easy and familiar.

We would again enter our protest against the indolent custom of sitting to sing the praises of God. Whatever may be said in its defence, this practice is not only injurious to the effect, but is, at the same time, irreverent and indecent; and ought never to be encouraged by

those who wish to conduct the worship of God with propriety.

If these regulations were adopted, the performance of this duty would doubtless be much improved, and many improprieties avoided that now deform our sacred music. How far our advice may be attended to, time must discover. Certain it is that the practice of singing, in most of our places of worship, is sunk into a state of degradation, from which nothing less than a thorough reformation can recover it. We well know the force of prejudice in favour of long established practices, and that "to remove "an old custom, though a bad one, is like removing an "ancient land-mark;" but if reason be suffered to operate, prejudice must soon give place, and reformation will necessarily follow.

There are, however, many persons of all denominations, who are inveterate enemies to innovation in any case, and who will admit of no alteration whatsoever, in their established habits, especially in their modes of religious worship. But such persons should consider that abuses, of every kind, are introduced by slow, and imperceptible degrees; while on the contrary, they are seldom removed without some violent effort. The errors, and absurdities, that abound in the worship of the Romish church, were introduced gradually; and if the improprieties that at present exist, in this branch of religious worship, be suffered to go on without interruption, it is impossible to say where they will end. It is therefore, undoubtedly, incumbent upon all professing Christians, to correct

every abuse that tends to degrade this duty,—to encourage every thing that may improve, and render it respectable,—and, in all things that relate to the worship of God, to act in conformity to the direction of the Apostle, "Let all things be done decently, and in order."

Finis.

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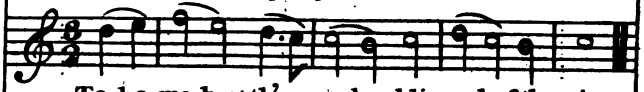
Fig. 1.

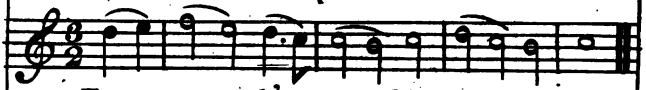
Example 1.

Improper.



To-ho me-heet th'as-so-hemblies o-hof thy saints

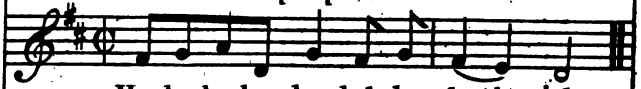
Proper.



To-o me-eet th'as-se-emblies o-of thy saints

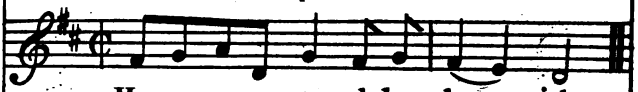
Example 2.

Improper.



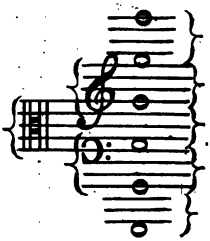
Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-hal-le--lu-hu-jah.

Proper.



Ha-a-a-a-a-al-le--lu-u-jah.

Fig. 2.



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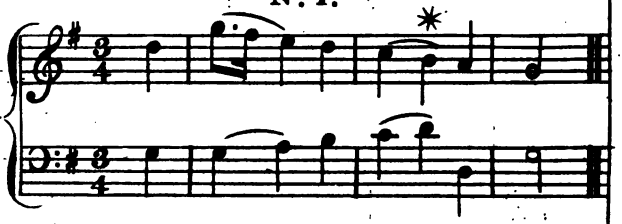

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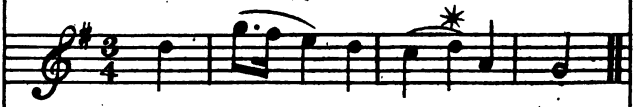

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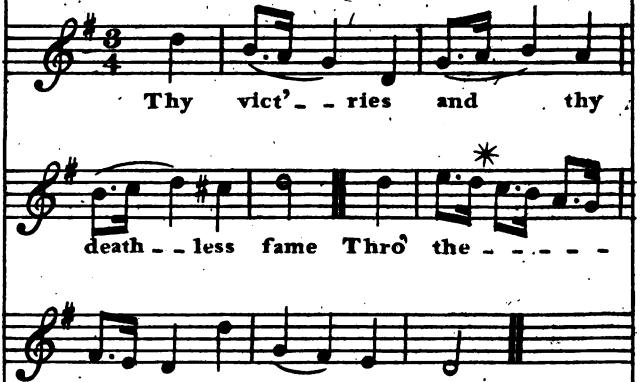

Fig. 5.

EXAMPLE 1.

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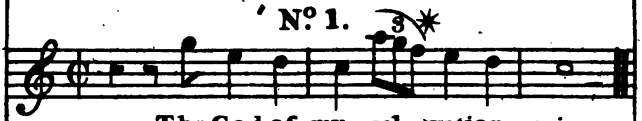

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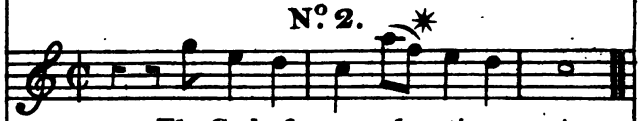

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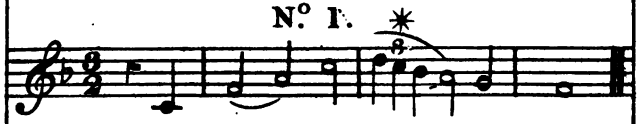

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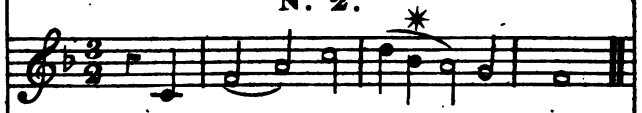

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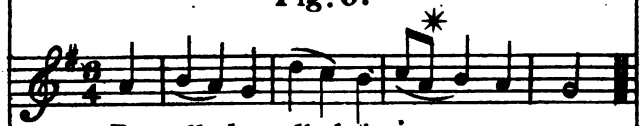

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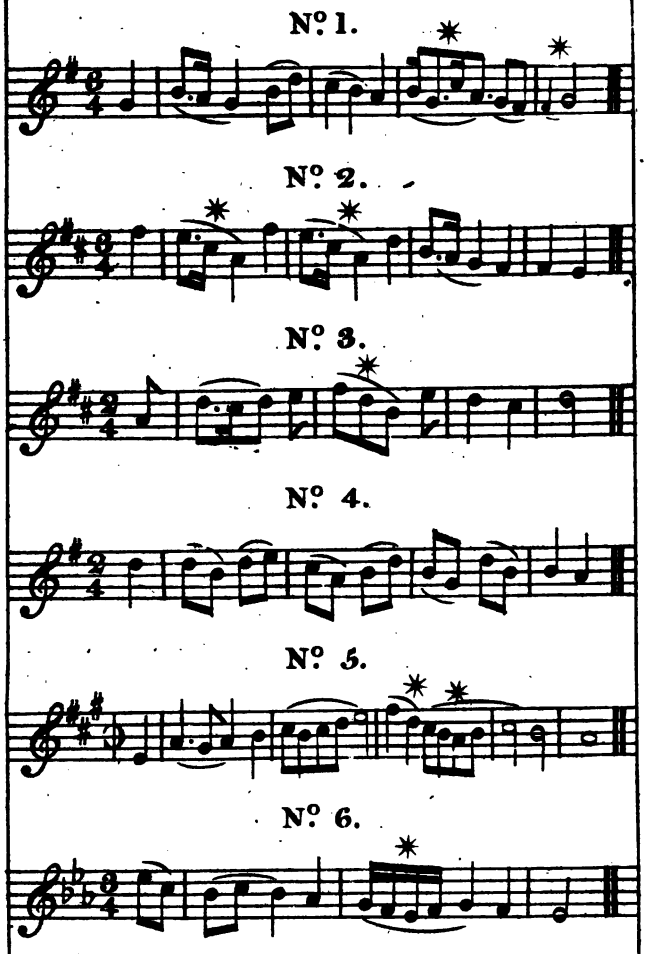
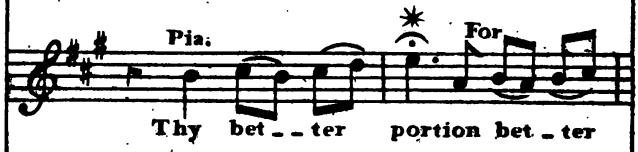
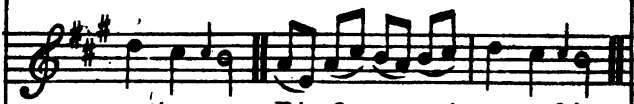
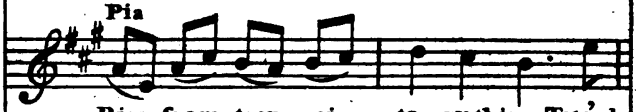


Fig. 8.

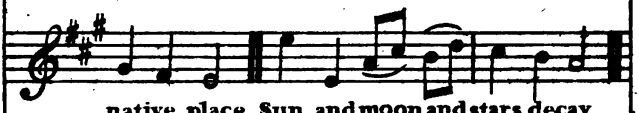
Rise my soul and stretch thy wings

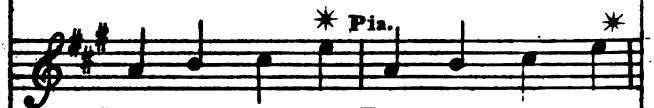

Pia.
For
Thy bet - - ter portion bet - ter

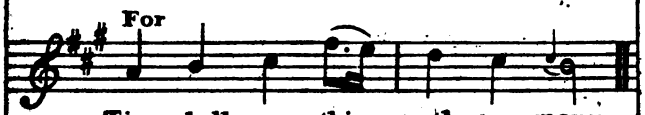

portion trace; Rise from transi - tory things,

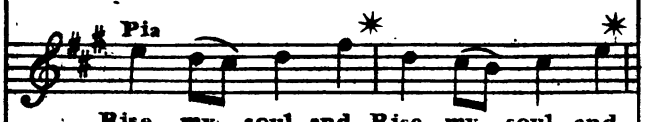

Pia
Rise from tran - si - - to - ry things, Tow'rds

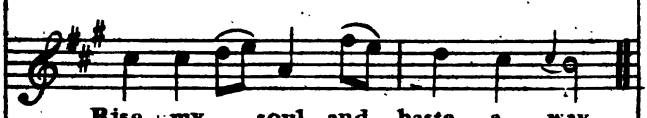
For.
heav'n thy na - tive place, Tow'rds heav'n thy

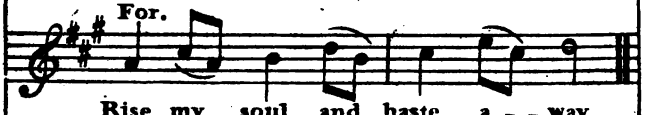

native place Sun and moon and stars decay,

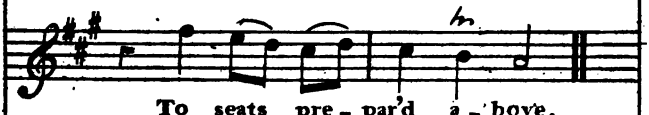

Pia.
Time shall soon this Time shall soon this


For
Time shall soon this earth re - move;


Pia
Rise my soul and Rise my soul and


Rise my soul and haste a - - way,


For.
Rise my soul and haste a - - way


To seats pre - par'd a - bove.

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